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Benjamin Franklin, Orthoepist and Phonetician

VOL. 2

Colonial American Voices and London Norms:
Franklin's Quest for an Orthographic Reform

Gary D. German



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,
ORTHOEPIST AND PHONETICIAN

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AMERICAN
PHILOSOPHICAL
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To my wife, Marie-Laure, to my children, Glyn,
Morwenna, Ronan

and my five grandchildren, Gabriel, Nora, Timothée,
Liam and Mathis

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Phonetic Notation

The notion of an “ideal speaker” living in a “completely homogenous speech community” who can intuitively determine the grammatical correctness or “well-formedness” of any given sentence is merely a theoretical construct and that is precisely what Chomsky intended (Chomsky 1965). In reality, however, the social status and geographical provenance of any given individual determines the degree to which he/she is exposed to the varieties and registers that compose his/her native language(s). For this reason, one’s knowledge and mastery of it can only ever be partial. This explains the variation that exists between members of the same speech community and even between members of one’s own family. In this sense, individual speakers are like dots in a pointillist painting. Only when one steps back and views them collectively can one fully appreciate the complexity of the total image before us.

I have studied Franklin’s *Reformed Mode of Spelling* and the genesis of American English from a variationist viewpoint. As I explain in the General Introduction, although the English of England and North America have the same basic origins, I consider that each regional dialect, subdialect and micro-dialect in both Britain and America has/had its own specific cultural and social history and thus its own phonemic subsystem(s). From a diachronic perspective, this is of critical importance.

For instance, Graham Shorrocks (1998) identified two distinct /ɛ:/ and /ɛ:/ phonemes in modern Bolton (Lancashire) English, just as in Middle English. How can this possibly fit into the Received Pronunciation/General American phonemic scheme (henceforth RP/GA)? Given the porosity between the phonemic boundaries between dialects, especially during the period under consideration, I was hesitant to present phonemic notation of any kind when discussing the colonial data assembled from the 17th- and 18th-century American and English sources. The same problem arises when considering British dialects as a whole. I have argued throughout this book that presenting a phonemic analysis under such conditions is based on the dubious assumption that the standard language should be the baseline by which all other varieties must be studied (cf. J. Milroy’s “standard ideology,” 1982).

Because of these uncertainties, I have preferred to use broad phonetic

transcription throughout this book and, in particular, wherever the data is available, I do my best to present what I have termed “phonetic ranges,” collections of competing variants which are composed of “bridge” or “transition” vowels, that is to say, allophones which can potentially belong to two different phonemes depending on the variety studied (cf. Chapter 11, Chapter 12 and Chapter 17 for a precise definition and discussion). Furthermore, in the case of phoneticians who use fine phonetic notation (i.e. Joseph Hall, 1942; Shorrocks, 1998), I have simplified their transcriptions to conform to this general approach but also for a very practical reason: phoneticians do not always agree on the precise quality of a sound that is represented by a given phonetic character or diacritic.

Likewise, it has not always been easy to interpret the precise phonetic values attributed to certain phonetic symbols used by earlier phoneticians such as Duncan MacKintosh, Charles Grandgent, George C. Krapp and others. In particular, their interpretations of low-mid back vowel “[ɔ(:)]” and unrounded low back [ɒ(:)] or completely unrounded [ɑ(:)] are particularly problematical and will be discussed in detail in Part III (Chapter 21 and Chapter 22). Even today, John Wells (1990, 2005) stresses the difficulty of identifying the quality of these vowels in American English.

IPA Vowel and Consonant Symbols, Descriptions and Key Words

Front vowels			Back vowels		
IPA	Vowel type	Key word	IPA	Vowel type	Key word
i(:)	High tense	Meat (tense Fr vie)	u(:)	High rounded	Goose
i(·)	High tense	Kit [ki-ɪt] (US South)	ʊ	High rounded	Foot
ɪ	High lax	Kit	ɔ(:)	High-mid rounded	Skol (Br)
ɛ(:)	High lax	Été “summer” (Fr)	ɤ	Slightly centralized high-mid	Strut (Nfk)
ɛ(·)	Mid	Ker “farm” (Br)	ɔ(·)	Mid rounded	Hole (GA)
ɛ(:)	Low mid	Face (Lancashire)	ɤ	Slightly centralized mid	Strut (Lancs)
æ	Low	Trap	ɔ(:)	Low-mid	Taught
a(:)	Lower	Là “there” (Fr)	ʌ	Slightly centralized low-mid	But (RP)
			ɒ(:)	Low	Lot (RP)
			ɑ(:)	Lower	Lot (GA)

Br = Breton, Nfk = Norfolk, Lnc = Lancashire

Front vowels			Central vowels		
IPA	Vowel type	Key word	IPA	Vowel type	Key word
y(:)	Rounded high front	Tu (Fr)	ə	Mid-mid central	Road (Avis, 1971; NE US)
ɥ(:)	Less rounded high front	Go (Lancs)	ə	Central	Better (RP)
ø	High-mid rounded front	Eux (Fr)	ɜ:	Low-mid central	Bird (RP)
œ	Low-mid rounded front	Oeuf (Fr)			

Consonants		
IPA	Consonant type	Key words
p	Voiceless bilabial stop	Pale
b	Voiced bilabial stop	Bale
t	Voiceless alveolar-dental	Tale
d	Voiced alveolar-dental stop	Dale
k	Voiceless velar stop	Key
g	Voiced velar stop	Go
f	Voiceless labio-dental fricative	Fat
v	Voiced labio-dental fricative	Vat
θ	Voiceless inter-dental fricative	Thin
ð	Voiced inter-dental fricative	Then
s	Voiceless sibilant/apico-alveolar fricative	Sip
z	Voiced sibilant/apico-alveolar fricative	Zip
ʃ	Voiceless palato-alveolar fricative	Ship
ʒ	Voiced palato-alveolar fricative	Measure
h	Voiceless glottal fricative	Hat
l	Apico-alveolar lateral	Led
ɫ	Velar lateral/“dark <l>”	Well
r	Apico-alveolar flap	Better (GA)
ɻ	Strongly retroflex /r/	Rare (Somerset)
r	Apico-alveolar /r/	Right (Scots)
ɹ	Approximant /r/	Rare (RP/GA)
ʁ	Uvular /r/	Rire (Fr)
m	Voiced bilabial nasal	Mom
n	Voiced apico-alveolar nasal	Nine
ŋ	Voiced velar nasal	King
w	Bilabial approximant	Wind
j	Voiced palatal approximant	Yellow
tʃ	Voiceless palato-alveolar affricate	Chin
dʒ	Voiced palato-alveolar affricate	Gin
hw	Voiceless labialized glottal affricate	When (GA)

Diacritics	
C ^h	Aspirated consonant
Ç	Syllabic consonant
Ç̤	Voiced consonant
Ç̥	Voiceless consonant
Ṽ	Nasal vowel as in French ([ã], [õ], [ẽ...])
Ṳ	Central vowel
V:	Long vowel
V·	Half-long vowel
ˈ	Primary stress (syllable or word)
ˌ	Secondary stress (syllable or word)

Acronyms

ALF – *Atlas linguistique de la France*, Gilliéron and Edmont (1902-1910)

AAVE – African American Vernacular English

ALBB – *Atlas Linguistique de la Basse-Bretagne*, Pierre Le Roux (1924-1967)

EME – Early Middle English

GA – General American, the label used to describe the pronunciation of the majority of the American people spreading out from the mid-west to the far west and excluding the eastern seaboard, both north and south.

GVS – Great Vowel Shift

LALME – *Linguistic Atlas of Late Middle English*, Angus McKintosh et al. (1986)

ME – Middle English

NALBB – *Nouvel Atlas Linguistique de la Basse-Bretagne*, Jean Le Dû (2001)

OE – Old English

OF – Old French

RMS – *Reformed Mode of Spelling* (the title of Franklin's treatise on modernizing English orthography)

RP – "Received Pronunciation." Although this term is somewhat dated, I prefer it to "southern British English" which, in my view, is terribly vague in that we don't know whether we are dealing with dialects or educated/standard southern English pronunciation.

SAWD – *Survey of Anglo-Welsh Dialects*, David Parry (vol. 1, 1977; vol. 2, 1979)

SED – *Survey of English Dialects*, Orton and Deith (1962-71)

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PART III.

A HISTORICAL PHONOLOGY OF COLONIAL
NEW ENGLAND ENGLISH

“PROBING UNDER THE ICEBERG”

Introduction to Part III

La Phonétique, et la phonétique toute entière, est le premier objet de la linguistique diachronique ; en effet l'évolution des sons est incompatible avec la notion d'état.

(de Saussure, 1916, 194)¹

Chapters 16, 17 and 18 present the history of front vowels with special concentration on their parallel developments in England and in North America during the colonial period. Particular attention will be paid to New England. More specifically, Chapter 16 focuses on the evolution of high front ME /i:/ and ME /i/, respectively the ancestors of *Price* and *Kit* words. Regarding *Price* words, we trace the passage to diphthongization and the complexities of this shift. The variant forms that composed the North American feature pool during the 17th and 18th centuries are addressed. The lengthening of the *Kit* vowel, the origin of breaking, as well as the lowering of /i/ (i.e. [ɪ]) to /ɛ/ and its centralization before /r/, are presented.

Chapter 17 begins with a discussion entitled “Principles and Obstacles,” in which the difficulties of identifying phonemes in a multidialectal environment are addressed as well as the important question of “bridge” or “transition” vowels that permit the lowering or raising of vowels. The chapter analyzes the development of ME high-mid /e:/ with a discussion demonstrating the survival examples of raised ME /e:/ in New England. We then move on to ME low-mid /ɛ:/. Given the intricacy and the volume of the data obtained, Chapter 18 continues the discussion on ME /ɛ:/ and moves on to ME short /ɛ/. The lowering of /ɛ/ > /æ/ as well as the centralization of these vowels before /r/ are also addressed. Finally, Chapter 19 provides an analysis of the environments in which the reflexes of ME /a/ have evolved. The diversity of forms that have arisen is as impressive as their treatment.

Chapters 20 through 23 focus on back vowels and on precisely the same kinds of issues covered in the discussions on front vowels. Chapter 20 is dedicated to the treatment of high back ME /u:/ and ME short /u/. In the first case, we shall see

¹ “The field of Phonetics, including all its components, constitutes the principal focus of diachronic linguistics, since the evolution of sounds is incompatible with the very notion of an unchanging linguistic state” (De Saussure, 1916, 194).

that the route to diphthongization was the same as that explained for high front ME /i:/ in Chapter 16. However, just as in the preceding chapters, the crucial role played by “bridge” vowels in vocalic shifts will be highlighted. The reflexes of ME /u/ are studied in this context, with special attention being paid to shortened [u ~ ʊ ~ ʏ] reflexes in Eastern England, the Midlands and in New England.

This is followed by Chapter 21 which investigates the development of high mid ME /o:/ (i.e. [ɔ:]) and the range of diphthongs that have arisen from this source. The chapter begins with a similar discussion to the one that was broached in Chapter 17 and is entitled “Principles and Obstacles.” This time, the concentration is on the difficulties of analyzing back vowels. Here again, the association between IPA symbols and sounds is not always easy. As discussed by Wells (1988, 1990, 2005) and Roach (2012), these are particularly troublesome in that they pose particularly difficult problems of interpretation, both dialectally and diachronically and also at the level of phonetic analysis. We shall see that, over the past one hundred years, American and British phoneticians seem to have attributed different values to the same IPA symbols, in particular regarding the value of /ɔ:/ and /ɒ/. I argue, for instance, that the EME reflexes of *Taught* words were more likely to have been /ɒ: ~ ɑ:/, an argument supported by Mazarin (2020) (cf. Chapter 23). Also discussed are issues similar to those broached in the analyses of front vowels, namely, their raising, lowering, lengthening and shortening.

Chapter 22 concentrates on the importance of the “New England short o” given that it is the key to understanding the question of imperfect rhymes broached in Chapter 15. Here we explore its origins and the remarkable contemporary parallels that are still found in England, in particular Norfolk, but also the Midlands (Wright, 1905; Orton & Tilling, 1971; Trudgill, 2016). The results of this study demonstrate that the *Strut-Foot* non-split had not yet occurred in Massachusetts during Franklin’s lifetime. It also identifies several subclasses of *Goat*, *Goose* and *Lot* words which were also realized as [ʏ ~ ʊ], resulting in bewildering rhymes such as *God* ~ *flood*, *road* ~ *rod*, *God* ~ *stood* and so on. I also demonstrate that identical rhymes were common among the English poets going back to Shakespeare. This is a feature of English phonology which has never been fully studied. This presentation is intended as an initiation to the topic.

Chapter 23 investigates the diphthongs and consonants as they would have been pronounced by dialect speakers in 17th- and 18th-century England and in the American colonies. The diphthongs since the Middle English period are particularly complex and their treatment exposes us to the remarkable variety of paths that ME *ai*, *iu*, *eu*, *au*, *oi*, *ou* have followed at any given time over the past five hundred years.

As mentioned previously, consonants are relatively stable elements in

any linguistic system and this explains the relative brevity of this particular discussion. That is, the consonant system has changed relatively little when compared to the vocalic system. Nevertheless, I present a few peripheral characteristics, for instance, the conservation of ME /x/, ME /kn-/, ME /m-/, etc. by older speakers during the 17th century and which would have been in the New England feature pool, at least initially. They were all recessive at the time in New England, although /m-/ is still commonly heard in the southern states today.

Finally, Chapter 24 provides a summary of all the data covered in Part III. Here I have gathered all the features that are known to represent Franklin's Massachusetts (and Philadelphia-influenced) pronunciation as well as the "phonetic ranges" associated with New England English. What is novel about this approach is that, based on the descriptions of the English orthoepists, I have attempted to identify the conservative vs innovative features corresponding to each vowel of Wells' lexical sets both for New England and, more specifically, as revealed by Franklin's poetic rhymes. We shall see that, by and large, conservative features are defended by the social elites, while innovations tend to be introduced from below. ME /ɛ:/ > /i:/ is attested in late 16th-century London and, for nearly two hundred years was considered "vulgar." We shall also see that this negative judgement of /i:/ was, at least initially, shared by Franklin himself. It is now part and parcel of the RP/GA phonemic model.

Collectively, I hope to show that the extensive data presented in Part III supports my argument that Franklin's pronunciation remained very close to his original Boston speech, and that it reflects perfect continuity with the New England town records of the preceding century and the testimonies of the English orthoepists of the 17th century. The basic conclusion is that his pronunciation was quite conservative for the time, broadly corresponding to Mazarin's C1 variety (1650-1700).

In Part IV, I shall demonstrate that Franklin's RMS proto-phonological model was significantly different from the phonetic ranges that characterize New England speech and, more particularly, Franklin's own idiolect. I shall also argue that his model integrates a number of innovative pronunciations that were common to London during the last quarter of the 18th century. Without the data presented in Part III revealing the phonology of the New England koine and, more specifically, of Franklin's own idiolect, this analysis would have been impossible. Finally, Part III and Part IV demonstrate that previous assumptions that Franklin's RMS represented his own pronunciation are mistaken.

In the following chapters, time and time again, one observes multiple stages of frozen linguistic developments co-existing cross-dialectally in a way that relativizes the synchronic and diachronic distinctions that are sometimes imposed on linguists. In this sense, de Saussure (1916, 117, 119) imagined the two as inviolably distinct branches of linguistics which could not be confused

and this has been the rule for generations of linguists since his time. He writes,

The first thing that strikes the linguist when studying linguistic facts is that for a speaker their succession in time is non-existent: he is faced with a state. Therefore, the linguist who wants to understand this (i.e. static linguistic) state must make a clean sweep of everything that produced it and ignore diachrony. (my italics, 117)...

The opposition between the two points of view – synchronic and diachronic – is absolute and allows for no compromise. (119)²

Nevertheless, De Saussure also viewed these subjects as being complementary and, at a time when linguists were attempting to provide a firm scientific foundation to the study of language, setting rigid barriers between the branches of linguistics was a laudable goal. However, as we shall see repeatedly in the following chapters, contrary to what he says here, synchronic linguistics is not at all “static” nor is the contemporary language that any of us speaks representative of such a state, ideal or otherwise (cf. Labov, 1966). Quite the opposite, synchronic linguistics is a mere cover term for a phenomenon that is multidimensional and which I view to be infinitely dynamic. For this reason, synchronic and diachronic linguistics are thus inextricably bound. Throughout this study we shall study a multitude of examples gleaned from contemporary non-standard varieties, the pronunciations of which conform nicely with the information obtained from the orthoepists descriptions of 17th- and 18th-century “polite” or “vulgar” phonetic features and the New England poets’ rhymes. Despite significant gaps in time, these observations often overlap and are frequently bound together, often in unforeseeable ways. The deeper logic of the approach adopted here has been explained in detail in the preceding chapter.

2 “La première chose qui frappe quand on étudie les faits de langue, c’est que pour le sujet parlant leur succession dans le temps est inexistant : il est devant un état. Aussi le linguiste qui veut comprendre cet état doit-il faire table rase de tout ce qui l’a produit et ignorer la diachronie (p. 117)... L’opposition entre les deux points de vue – synchronique et diachronique – est absolue et ne souffre pas de compromis” (p. 119).

16. High Front Vowels: ME /i:/, /i/

1. High-Front Vowels: Reflexes of ME /i:/ and /i/

1.1 ME /i:/ (Precursor of *Price* Words, RP/GA /aɪ/)

The initial shift from ME /i:/ (to contemporary GA/RP /aɪ/) involved the introduction of a high lax front vowel [ɪ] as the first element of a new diphthong: [ɪi]. Citing Wilhelm Viëtor, Mazarin (2020, 18) suggests that Shakespeare's pronunciation of ME *i*: approached this [ɪi] diphthong and that he "sometimes dreams up long chains of *Price* rhymes just for the fun of it"...

The /i:/ is most striking in final position," where Shakespeare and other half-A poets usually rhyme -y words like *melody* with tonic PRICE /i:/ words like *buy*, and only rarely with tonic FLEECE /e:/ words like *be* (which they probably said as very tense [be:z]). For example, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Titania's lovely ten-line verse rhymes <-y> with PRICE six times, and only once with FLEECE: *eyes–dewberries, mulberries–humblebees, thighs–eyes, arise–butterflies, eyes–courtesies*. Each of these words ends in /-i(:)z/ except *humblebees* [-be:z].¹ (Mazarin, 2020, 18)

Based on my fieldwork on south-central Cornouaillais Breton, which also has a similar [ɪi ~ ɛi] diphthong,² this English [i:] > [ɪi] must have been barely discernible, if at all, to contemporaries and was almost certainly an allophone of earlier ME /i:/, [i: ~ ɪi]. I would propose that the phonemic tipping point which triggered the GVS came when the first element of this [ɪi] diphthong was lowered even further to [ɛi], the onset vowel being pronounced like high-mid French <é> (cf. below for more on this high mid front vowel). The fact is that [ɛi] and [ei] were probably in circulation in some dialects long before Shakespeare's day (cf. Wyld below).

One clue that argues in favour of this shift to [ɛi] > [ɛi] > [ei] is found in a poem entitled "Hymn to the Virgin" that was composed around 1480 by a Welsh student at Oxford named Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal. In response to derogatory

1 Mazarin's [-be:z] corresponds to my [bɛ:z] with the equivalent of high-mid French <é>.

2 The word *bihan* "small" is pronounced [brɪn] or [bɛɪn] in southern Cornouaille (St Yvi, Elliant) and even trained phoneticians have transcribed it as [bi:n].

comments by his English classmates that the Welsh were poor poets, Swardwal composed this poem to demonstrate that the Welsh were superior to the English in this domain. To prove his point, he wrote it in English using Welsh orthography (hence its great phonetic value to us) and following the highly strict rules of *cynganedd*, formal patterns of alliteration and assonance inherited from early Welsh bardic poetry. Swardwal consistently transcribed words such as “I” as *ei*, “to abide” *tabeit*, “Christ” *kreist*, “guiding” *geiding*... This poem offers a clear idea of what late 15th-century English sounded like to a well-educated Welsh speaker and poet and I have proposed that it represents [ɛi ~ ei] (German, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2007). William Salesbury, the author of *A Dictionary in Englyshe and Welshe*, published in 1547, provides similar evidence.

Dobson, however, argues that Swardwal’s pronunciation of orthographic <ei> was [əi] in this poem (Dobson, 1968, 661) but this is based on the pronunciation of contemporary Welsh, but even today, [ɛi] is the most common pronunciation of lexical <ei> in most dialects of Welsh.

Lass has also come to a similar conclusion and defends the first part of this hypothesis, writing that the shift from ME *i:* to [əi] “has become something of an orthodoxy; it is given in textbooks like Strang (1970) and Görlach (1978) without argument. It is also manifestly wrong” (Lass, 1999, 81-83). Lass (1999, 81-82, cf. Wolfe, 1972, 9-15, 107-109) hammers this point home stating that no orthoepist “before Hodges (1644) reports anything interpretable as a central vowel in the relevant positions...”

If [ɛi ~ ei] were still the dominant pronunciations in England prior to the early 17th century, as Lass proposes, and as appears to have been the case in the colonies, the passage from ME /i:/ to [ai] would have taken the form of a direct downward shift that has traditionally been proposed in the context of the Great Vowel Shift. This model lies at the heart of the successive vocalic shifts displayed in Figure 16.1 below.

ME /i:/ > [ɪi] > [ɛi] > [əi] > [ei] > [æi] > [ai]

If so, how did the centralized onset variants come about? Hodges was a Londoner and, despite Lass’ eminently logical conclusion, I also believe that [əi] did not just spring up out of nowhere. Recall that Mazarin (2020, 6) proposed that Wilkins’ and Cooper’s *Price* words were pronounced [ɹi] (cf. Chapter 13). If Lass and Mazarin are correct, one must ask how the onset vowel of these diphthongs travelled from front to back? The only possibility would have been via a process of centralization. Assuming that this occurred in *southeastern dialects* around London during the 16th century, perhaps starting around 1500 or later, several paths could have been taken:

- a. [ɛi] (circa 1475-1500?) > [øi] > [əi] (1644, Lass) > [ɹi] (1668, Mazarin)

A second possible variant of this shift can also be envisaged involving a slightly lower [ɛi] as a starting point.

- b. [ɛi] > [æi] > [ɜi] > [Ai] > [ɔi] with latter possibly followed by a downward shift) to [ɔi] (common in London by the end of the 18th century).

Put another way, a) and b) should perhaps be viewed as variants of the same shift. I would wager that the reason these central pathways have generally not been proposed is because the approach is phonetical while most linguists in the past have been thinking along phonological lines. That is, once the /ɛi/ stage was reached, the [ɛ] onset vowel would have been subjected to weakening or reduction to [ə]. In other words, /ɛi/ had two allophones [ɛi ~ əi]. This centralized [əi] allophone would then have been fronted back to /ɛi/ at some point, thus allowing for the downward shift to /ai/ to proceed.

Although I respect the logic of the proposal, I reject this assumption because it rests on the supposition that all dialects of English in the North and South functioned more or less in tandem and in a linear fashion. Nothing could be further from reality (again, see Milroy, 1982, 2001). We have seen that each dialect has (and always has had) its own phonemic and sociolinguistic history. This means that a phoneme boundary in one variety is not necessarily the same in another (cf. Chapter 17, “Principles and Obstacles”).

Although these central a) and b) routes have rarely been envisaged, it makes sense at a holistic level. Route a), has the added advantage of supporting Lass’ argument of [ɛi ~ əi] existing prior to [əi] in the 17th century. Although Dobson would have vehemently disagreed, Lass’ argument for the late emergence of an [əi] stage is perfectly in line with his analysis. It also reconciles Mazarin’s assessment that Wilkins’ and Cooper’s *Price* words were realized as [ɹi] (although I would propose a slightly lower [ɻ] onset vowel). As we shall soon see, this is the proposal I make for Franklin’s *Price* words, namely [əi ~ ɹi] variables. These were in competition with [ɛi], [æi] and [ai], not only in New England but also throughout the colonies, where [əi] appears to have been a prestigious sociolinguistic marker.

Dobson (1968, 662) states that [ai] had been reached in the North and perhaps in the South in “less careful” English by around 1600. This would necessarily have passed downward through [ɛi] > [æi] > [ai]. The timeline proposed here does not seem to be problematic.

This account offers the advantage of providing a straightforward explanation for the realization of GA/RP *Price* words. It also explains the diachronic development [ɛi] and [æi] forms in 17th and 18th century colonial Massachusetts (impossible if we allow for only the centralization pathways observed in the a) and b).

If [ai] had been reached by around 1600, as Dobson (1968, 662), another

possible alternative could be considered, namely, the centralization of [ai] along a diagonal route:

c. [ai] (1600) > [ɛi] > [əi] (1644, Lass 1999) > [Λi] > [ɔi].

The disadvantage of this hypothesis, however, is that the sound changes involved in c) would all have appeared in the course of the 17th century, which I consider to be an unreasonably short (although not impossible) timeframe for so much concentrated activity. It also complicates Mazarin's [ɹi] analysis. On the whole, although plausible, this last development seems overly complicated and, of the three routes of centralization proposed, a) along with the b) variant, appears to be provide the simplest explanation and to offer the most flexibility.

Finally, however, the origin of [ɔi] / [ɔi] pronunciations in the London area could be explained by a simple backshift from [ai] > [ɑi], followed by raising to [ɔi] > [ɔi]. This is perhaps preferable to hypotheses b) and c) although multiple courses of development are not to be excluded.

These models are experimental and are obvious simplifications of reality. Yet, they do offer the real advantage of taking into account nearly all of the recorded pronunciations proposed by orthoepists from the Early Modern English period to the present day (including an array of dialectal English pronunciations still heard in America and Great Britain). More importantly for our discussion, these models also accurately reflect the feature pools and phonetic ranges of *Price* words in the 17th- and 18th-century American colonies (see section 1.1.3 below).

1.1.1 [ɛi] > [æi] > [ai]

Orbeck's observations about the diachronic development of ME /i:/ merit being repeated here. Wyld, in his *Short History of English* (1915, §254), states that the [ɛi] stage had been reached in the "early 15th century," which corresponds well to my own analysis of Swrdwal's orthographic <ei> [ɛi ~ ɛi]. He goes on to state that the "beginning of the /ai/ stage was at the end of the sixteenth century, and thus a few decades earlier than Dobson's proposed date of 1600.

Based on the evidence obtained from the New England town records, Orbeck (1927, 51-52) argued that the [ɛi] phase stretched to the end of the 17th century and, I would add, well into the 18th century based on the evidence presented in this chapter. Very significantly, William Kenrick (1773, 24), born in Hertfordshire, describes the *Price* diphthong as being pronounced like the <e> of "mate" and the <i> of "hit," hence [ɛ:ɪ] or [ɛ:ɪ]. This would thus be a very late English realization of this older 15th-century pronunciation. On pages 40-41, Kenrick implies that the pronunciation of "mate" was close to that of French *nès* (which he spells with an *accent grave*, i.e. [ɛ]) and *dez*, *clef*, *parler*, *fondés*, *amai*, *dirai*. For one thing, *nès* does not exist in French (was he thinking of *nez* "nose"

or *né(s)* “born”?). Taken literally, *nès* <è> and <ai> (*amai?* and *dirai*) are realized as /ɛ/ while *nez*, *des*, *clefs* (now spelt *clé*), *parler* and *fondés* are all pronounced /ɛ/ (orthographic é). These examples suggest that he could not hear the difference between phonemic French /ɛ/ (é) and /ɛ/ (è).

On the following page, however, Kenrick writes that words such as “I, why, nigh, guide, fie,” etc. are pronounced as follows:

As at present uttered by the best speakers in metropolis, it is the sharpest, shrillest, and clearest vowel in our language, although it has the appearance, when slowly pronounced of being a *compound of the a or e* (my italics) and i. (Kenrick, 1773, 41)³

Here he seems to be describing two variant forms: /ai/ or /ɛi/. Nevertheless, “being a compound of a or e and i” appears to mean [ɛi] or [ai] or, perhaps a “fusion” of [a] + [ɛ], in which case he may have been thinking of [æi]. That Kenrick should have wavered in his [ɛi] ~ [æi] ~ [ai] realizations of *Price* words is highly interesting because [æi] was described as the dominant form in rural Massachusetts during the 19th century by Grandgent (1899) and we have already seen in Chapter 15 that [æi] and [ɛi] pronunciations are/e common in London, Essex, Kent and Surry .

Given Lass’ analysis above, I would wager that this [ɛi] realization in Massachusetts was most probably already the dominant pronunciation in 18th-century Massachusetts but also large parts of southern England. How else could [æi] have become the principal realization in rural Massachusetts during the 19th century if it did not stem from [ɛi] (Grandgent, 1899)?

The Massachusetts evidence reinforces Lass’ statements, since Orbeck (1927, 50) also states that he was not sure about the existence of an [əi] diphthong (although he concludes that it probably was represented by <i> spellings). He presents the following examples as possible examples of [ɛi]: *Eiues*, [ɛivz] for “Ives” (Watertown, 1653), *sheire* [ʃɛiɹ] for “shire” (Dedham, 1654, Watertown, 1664), *sheir* [ʃɛiɹ] (Dedham, 1690), *shear* [ʃɛəɹ] (Watertown, 1679), *heir* [hɛiəɹ] “hire” (Watertown, 1670), *bey* [bɛi] “buy” (Watertown, 1670), *eydell* [ˈɛidɫ] “idle” (Watertown, 1672), *eydellnes* [ˈɛidɫnəs] (Watertown, 1672), *reise* [ɹɛis] “rice” (Dedham, 1679), *feiu* [fɛiv] for “five” (Groton, 1702) and also *layable* [ˈlɛiəbɫ ~ ˈlæiəbɫ] for “liable” (Orbeck, 1927, 50).

Furthermore, in addition, the evidence presented by Orbeck for the survival of [ɛi] is boosted by Mazarin’s conclusion that [ɛi] was representative of the Type-B phase (roughly 1550-1675). We have also cited Lass’ forceful argument that ME /i:/ passed first to /ɛi/ before reaching /əi/ (Lass, 1999, 81). Given the evidence, this makes perfect sense.

³ Many thanks to Joan Beal for this reference.

1.1.2 [ɛi] > [æi] > [ai] versus > [əi]?

As stated above, Dobson (1968, 662) points out that the [ai] stage had already been reached in the North of England by at least 1600, but he adds that “it is unlikely that the sound [ai] was ever heard in *careful Southern English before 1700*” (my italics). Dobson’s analysis is comforted by Gil (1619) who confirms that [ai] was a northern pronunciation. However, Gil also states that [ɛi] was the southern pronunciation. As we have seen, Dobson (1968, 661) stubbornly rejects the possibility of this [ɛi] realization in the South asserting that it only had an “approximate value” and he continues to adhere to his belief that [əi] was the southern pronunciation rather than [ɛi]. On this particular point, I believe Dobson’s opinion is far too restrictive.

Nevertheless, although Dobson believes [ai] was unlikely in “careful southern English” before 1700, he acknowledges that it *was* heard in the South in less polite circles. Under these conditions, one can imagine that [ai] was already in circulation in southern England throughout the 1600s. The question that then arises is this: if [əi] was the dominant pronunciation in the South, as Dobson proposed, how can we explain the development of [ai]? The obvious answer is that [ɛi] still had to have been widespread in order for it to morph into [æi] at some point in the 16th century and then move on to [ai] by the end of that century, if not before. In other words, the first element of the [ɛi] diphthong was lowered to [æi], thus serving as a bridge vowel before being finally lowered to [ai]. This analysis supports the hypothesis of the direct downward passage from ME /i:/ > [ir] > [ɛi] > [əi] > [æi] > [ai] previously proposed.

Kenrick’s “a or e and i” cited provides a possible example of this, that is, [æi]. Furthermore, both [æi ~ ai] would likely have coexisted during this time depending on the dialect and register. As proposed above, in the London area, [ai] could have been backed directly to [əi] and raised slightly to [ɔi] and then to [ɔi], perhaps during the 18th century.

Once again, if one excludes the idea of an early independent process of centralization proposed in a), whereby [ɛi] > [øi] > [əi] > [ʏi], the problem is that the development of [əi] could only have occurred via centralization once the [ai] stage was complete, leaving the route proposed in c) above. If one accepts this hypothesis, variants in [ɔi], [ɔi] and [ɔi] would thus appear to be among most innovative realizations. Once again, dating the precise appearance of any of these features is risky business. The attestation in writing of a given pronunciation does not preclude it from having existed orally at an earlier period.

If Wyld (1915) is correct and that some variant close to [ai] had already appeared by the end of the 16th century, one would have expected [ai] to have been present in the New England feature pool by the early 17th century. If the a) / b) hypothesis is favoured, this could reinforce the idea that [əi] and [ɔi] arose before [ai] in some dialects. Some support for this idea can be seen in Orbeck’s observation that he found little or no trace of [ai] in the four Massachusetts town records he analyzed.

1.1.3 Centralization to [əi] and [ɤi]

In Chapter 13, I indicated that it is virtually certain that Franklin borrowed Wilkins' <ɥ> character for his RMS, for which the conservative value appears to have been [ɣ ~ ɤ] (Mazarin, 2020). Recall that Franklin had studied Wilkins' *An Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language* (1668) when he was only sixteen years old. Logically, Wilkins' <ɥi> reflects [ɣi] or perhaps [ɤi] and the same would appear to be the case for Franklin. Given that Wells' diachronic analysis demonstrated that [ɣ] preceded the downward shift to [ʌ] (Wells 1988, 199), I have followed Mazarin and Wells on this point. We shall see in Chapter 21 and Chapter 22 that, based on Grandgent's precise descriptions of New England short u and o, orthographic <u> corresponded to [ɣ], while orthographic <o> may well have had a slightly lower value of [ɤ]. I have generally presented them as [ɣ ~ ɤ] variants.

We have seen that Wilkins transcribes the vowel of *son*, *suffered*, *buried*, *come* and *judge* with his <ɥ> [ɣ] character. So, does Franklin (cf. Part IV) and this falls nicely in line with my hypothesis for not only New England short o and but also short u. Both are keys to understanding the "imperfect" rhymes in Franklin's poems as well as those of Dwight and Barlow.

To summarize, in our discussion on Wilkins' influence on Franklin's RMS in Chapter 13, I pointed out that Mazarin (2020, 18) also presents a convincing argument that Cooper's *Price* diphthong was also realized as [ɣi] and he writes that, in his Type C dialects, "PRICE had already developed such a retracted onset (e.g. Cooper's "/ɣi/") that it could not be confused with [ɛi] in pairs like *thy* and *they*." Considering that Cooper's *The English Teacher of the Discovery of the Art of Teaching and Learning the English Tongue* was written in 1687, only four years after Franklin's father and older siblings left England for Massachusetts (1683), this [ɣi] pronunciation would presumably have been a feature of the New England phonetic range for *Price* words. Based on the rhymes of his Blackbeard poems he composed at the age of thirteen (i.e. 1719), indications are that [ɣi ~ ɤi] was indeed his native pronunciation, although [əi] entirely cannot be ruled out.

The distinction between the history of [ɣ] and [ɣi] is potentially quite tricky, because one cannot confuse the development of *Strut* words (i.e. *come*, *son*, *sun*) with Wilkins' and Cooper's [ɣi] or Franklin's native **ɥi** [ɣi ~ ɤi ~ əi] pronunciation of *Price* words. Put another way, whereas monophthongal **ɥ** represents conservative [ɣ ~ ɤ] (Chapter 21, Chapter 22 and Chapter 27), the onset of [ɣi ~ ɤi] appears to be comparatively innovative if we adopt the a) centralization hypothesis above (cf. Figure 16.1 below). The b) hypothesis, resulting in [ʌi], would be an alternative, but closely related development.

Furthermore, these centralized diphthongs clash with the older [ɛi] diphthong, which I have proposed was probably the dominant pronunciation in 17th-century rural Massachusetts. If [əi] was so widespread there in the 19th

century, as observed by Grandgent, it can only have resulted from a downward shift from [ɛi] (cf. Figure 16.1). For this reason, I have concluded [ɛi] and [æi] were still part of the New England feature pool in the 18th century, alongside centralized [ɹi]. We know that, by the late 19th century, [æi] was lowered to [ai] in urban areas of Massachusetts (Grandgent, 1899).

What this suggests to me sociolinguistically is that this [ɛi ~ æi] realization was most common among speakers at the lower end of the social spectrum during late 17th-century and early 18th-century Massachusetts and that [əi ~ ɹi] was favoured among the better educated, who attempted to copy the more prestigious London-style pronunciation. Again, this would explain why these pronunciations were most common in coastal port towns where contacts with England were the most sustained. Regardless of what his family and neighbours' pronunciation may have been ([ɒi] or [ɹi] or [əi] in this case), Franklin's natural inclination would have been to adopt the more prestigious form.

Be that as it may, as we shall see in Chapters 21 and 22, /ʁ/ was part of the phoneme inventory of Massachusetts English during the 17th and 18th centuries and /ʌ/ had not yet made its appearance there (Grandgent, 1899, 217). For this reason, the possibility of [əu ~ ɹi] realization of the *Price* diphthong in Massachusetts and New England more generally is very real.

NOTA BENE

Here we encounter a considerable problem of analysis at this point. We have concluded that Wilkins' and Franklin's **ʏ** and **ʏi** represented [ɹ ~ ɹ̥] and [ɹi ~ ɹ̥i] respectively. The problem we encounter, however, involves a serious discrepancy between Franklin's native Massachusetts pronunciation of these characters and the idealized London model of pronunciation that he imagined for his RMS. However, by the last quarter of the 18th century, the polite London values for **ʏ** and **ʏi** were most likely /ʌ/ and [ʌi ~ əi] respectively.

The dilemma was whether to interpret his RMS transcriptions as Franklin would have pronounced them or to respect the model of pronunciation he hoped would be adopted by all the subjects of the British Empire. The decision I have taken when reproducing the transcriptions of his proto-phonemic alphabet is to attribute the London value to each of his twenty-six characters. This specific case is the most delicate and, for the reason just explained, the phonemic values I have attributed to **ʏ** and **ʏi** are thus /ʌ/ and [ʌi/ [ʌi ~ əi].

Finally, if Grandgent (1899) is to be believed, Franklin and other Massachusettsans of his generation may not have been able to correctly reproduce either of these and a contemporary analogy may be made with many speakers of northern English varieties who encounter the same problem and are immediately identified by their pronunciation of *Strut-Foot* vowels as /ʊ/. We shall return to this important question in the chapters dealing with back vowels and in Appendices 2 and 3.

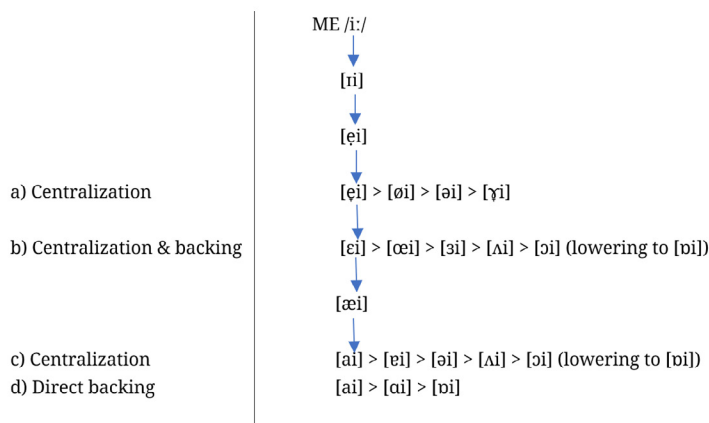
To return to the question of when these centralized diphthongs were introduced into Massachusetts and the colonies more generally, Orbeck has little evidence to show their presence in *Price* words but, then again, one wonders how this

sound could possibly have been indicated in traditional orthography. If my a), b) and/or c) hypotheses are plausible (see Figure 16.1 below), these centralized varieties clearly have their source in southeastern England and would have been introduced into the colonies by the founder generations during the first half of the 17th century.

As explained by Lass (1999) above, historical linguists have generally transcribed the *Price* diphthong as /əi/. As we shall see in Chapters 25 through 28, variants of this pronunciation can still be heard in the Ottawa Valley of Canada but especially in Newfoundland where it is still very much alive. It survived in Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island (Wise, 1948, 118) until at least the first half of the 20th century as well as on Martha's Vineyard until the last quarter of the 20th century (Labov, 1972). I never heard on Cape Cod or in southeastern Massachusetts as a boy, but it was one of the first things I noticed upon arriving in Virginia – the Chesapeake Bay, Eastern Shore Maryland, Tidewater Virginia (cf. Shores, 1984, 2000) and all the way down to the Outer Banks of North Carolina (Schilling-Estes & Wolfram, 1997) (cf. Chapter 23 for a more in-depth discussion).

Furthermore, sociolinguistically, we have seen that /əi/ was a salient marker of the London mesolect. The fact is that it has survived best along the eastern seaboard can probably be explained by the fact that these were regions where contacts with England were most frequent until the Revolution.

Fig. 16.1 The evolution of ME /i:/ and possible centralization routes: 1450-1800.



* The most likely explanation for the development of [ɒi ~ ɑi] pronunciations would seem via a direct path involving backing and lowering [ai] to [ɑi] followed by raising to [ɒi] ([ɒi] = popular London).

1.1.3 The Phonetic Range of New England Price Words

In his initial description of the *Price* diphthong in his original manuscript vowel and consonant table that he sent to Polly Stevenson on July 20, 1768 (cf. Chapter 26, Chapter 27), Franklin gave two realizations of this *Price* diphthong **ʏi** /Δi/ [ʏi ~ əi] and also **aaɪ** [ɔi]. In his RMS description explains that the onset vowel of **ʏi** had the same value as *huh*, *unto*, *umbrage*, etc. which corresponded to his native of [ʏi ~ ʏI ~ əi] but had London values of [Δi ~ əi]. The second diphthong had the value of [ɔ(:)i] with the possibility of a long [ɔ:] (based on his key word “all” which is the only word for which he clearly indicates a long [ɔ:], cf. Chapter 26).

Interestingly, only **ʏi** was retained in Vaughan’s 1779 published edition of the RMS. Franklin clearly appears to have been uncertain as to the sociolinguistic status of [ɔi]. Given that he had been in London for over ten years by the time he drafted his RMS, he must certainly have heard this [ɔi] pronunciation in the streets of London, a sound MacMahon (1998, 464) interprets to have been [ɔ:i]. It may also well be that it was considered vulgar by more cultivated Londoners at the time, including Polly Stevenson, who may have preferred the centralized London [Δi ~ əi] realization. This could thus be the reason why this [ɔi] variant was excluded in the final version of the RMS, perhaps at her suggestion or Benjamin Vaughan’s.⁴

Despite the fact that modern dialectal evidence is viewed as a breach of the diachronic vs synchronic doctrine, indirect support for these hypotheses can be envisaged by taking certain contemporary data into account. For the dialects of Essex, London and vicinities, for instance, Orton and Tilling (*Survey of English Dialects*, 1971, 1098) show that the dominant pronunciation of *sight* is [sɔɪt]. My suspicion is that it must already have been quite widespread in these same regions among the lower classes at the time and was therefore stigmatized (see also Australian English, where the founder generation also came from the London area). Note too that [sɔɪt] or [sɔit] is the current pronunciation throughout Northamptonshire as well (ibid.), the place of origin of Franklin’s father, uncle and older siblings. The question that arises in passing is whether Franklin’s older family members shared this [ɔi] pronunciation? I have found no evidence they did. If Franklin’s early representation of [ɔi] reflects London pronunciation, as I suspect, this could be the earliest evidence of London English [ɔi] for *Price* words.

Considering Ihalainen’s remarks about the conservatism of many 19th- and 20th-century English dialects, this modern evidence should not be ruled out too hastily (Ihalainen, 1994, 205). Recall that Ihalainen makes a strong case demonstrating that, globally speaking, 18th-century English dialects remained

4 Although Vaughan was born in Jamaica, he was raised in England and educated at Cambridge University.

stable (i.e. relatively unchanged) until the end of the 19th century (hence the great value of Alexander Ellis' and Joseph Wright's remarkable pioneering work (Ellis, 1869; Wright, 1898 and 1905)).

The *Survey of English Dialects* (SED) (Orton & Tilling, 1971) also shows that the realization of *sight* in Norfolk, the region from which both his maternal grandparents emigrated, is overwhelmingly [sait] today (in ten locations out of twelve). Is this a simple coincidence? These pronunciations were very probably in competition within not only the New England feature pool but also throughout the colonies, both North and South. Orbeck offers a commonsense conclusion to this discussion:

We need not insist that *oi* was pronounced [ei] or that orthographic *i* was pronounced [oi] (i.e. *aployd* for “applied”). It is more probable that the common sound was somewhat intermediate between the two, something like [øi] and that orthographic *i* and *oi* were equally adequate representations of this sound. (Orbeck, 1927, 51-52)

Nevertheless, Orbeck is proposing an either-or solution and, in so doing, he feels compelled to rule out the existence of variants, which is not his habit. We have seen already that this <oy> could just as readily represent [ʝi] as posited previously. We have already seen that Mazarin has concluded that [ʝi] was the pronunciation of some of the best educated orthoepists of the 17th century.

Given that *Choice* words and *Price* words were regularly rhymed by 18th-century American and English poets, including Franklin, some supporting evidence may come from the pronunciation of *Choice* words (Chapters 23 and 27). Walker (1791: xv) writes that the London realization of this first element of this diphthong was [ɑ], as in French <âi>. “The diphthong *oi* or *oy* is composed of the French *â* and *i*; thus “toy” and “boy” would be exactly expressed to a Frenchman by writing them *tâi* and *bâi*.” He also transcribes “joy” as *djâi*. Literally, this would mean [ɑ(:)i] but, as I have explained previously, to the English ear, French /ɑ(:)/ could have been reinterpreted and associated by some with proto-RP /ɒ(:)/. Support for this is that French <â> was often transcribed as <aw> (cf. Sir William Jones, Chapter 29). Franklin's London-type [ɒi] seems to be very close if not identical to Walker's representation of *Choice* words.

MacMahon (1998, 464) cites evidence for a London [ɔ:i] diphthong, which is not too distant, and this strongly suggests that some speakers had to be pronouncing *Price* words in the same way. Indeed, as we have seen above, [ɒi] is the dominant pronunciation given for Essex and the London area in the SED today.

This supports the idea of not only a London [ai ~ ɒi] interpretation for *Choice* words but also for *Price* words. We shall see that Franklin's muddled attempt to transcribe “destroy” also shows hesitation between [ɒi] pronunciation and [əi ~ ʝi] (cf. Chapter 23, Chapter 27).

Given the evidence examined here, it is probable that, in 17th-century America, we should be thinking in terms of multiple, competing variant pronunciations which almost certainly included a vast phonetic range that, at least theoretically, encompassed:

[ɛi ~ æi ~ ai ~ əi ~ ʌi ~ ʔi ~ ɔi ~ ɒi].

All of these would have been jumbled together in the New England feature pool in varying concentrations according to the settlements and demographic patterns involved. One look at the *Survey of English Dialects* demonstrates that this interpretation is not at all absurd when viewed from a ground-level, dialectal perspective. The sociolinguistic factors studied in Chapters 10 through 15, particularly 11 and 12, explain how and why this Massachusetts phonetic range was slowly whittled down to [əi ~ æi ~ ai] by the end of the 19th century and helps explain the existence of our contemporary RP/GA /aɪ/ diphthong (see Fig. 16.1).

This entire discussion demonstrates the extent to which attempts to narrow down sound changes to a single realization corresponding to a precise period of time is a fruitless task. Such matters can never be reduced to binary decisions (e.g. Dobson insistence that only [əi] could be heard in the South and not [ɛi] or [ai]). As we have just seen, all the pronunciations of *Price* words were in competition in both England and in the early American colonies during overlapping timeframes. The result of the confusion has been methodological. The first textual attestation of a given feature does not exclude the possibility that it has had a long existence before being committed to writing.

1.2 ME /i:/ > [ai] > [a: ~ ɑ:]

The early record of [ai] is interesting on other grounds because, throughout the North of England today, the pronunciation of this diphthong is often realized as a monophthongized [a:] or [ɑ:]. Shorrocks (1998, 274) gives numerous examples of it such as *like* [lɑ:k], *side* [sa:d], *my* [mɑ:], *I'm* [a:m], *life* [lɑ:f], *ice* [ɑ:s], *pie* [pa:], *time* [tɑ:m]... He suggests that this pronunciation is more stigmatized today than pronunciations with [ai] and its local variant forms but may be a relic of this earlier [ai] pronunciation which eventually went on to become the RP/GA norm.

Hall (1942, 43) also gives precisely the same treatment of [ai] > [a:] for the Smokies, where he states that it can be reduced to [aⁱ], [a], [ɑ], exactly as described by Shorrocks for Lancashire. He gives numerous variable examples such as *ice* [ɑ:s], *nice* [nɑ:s], *eyes* [a:z], *shine* [ʃa:n], *five* [fɑ:v], etc. (I have added the vowel length here). This pronunciation is also common throughout the American South.

My hypothesis is that the treatment of [ai] > [a:] in both regions may share the

same historical origins as the North Midlands (east and west) of England.⁵ Guy Bailey's contention that southern US [a:], corresponding to GA /aɪ/, only arose during the 19th century seems unlikely on account of other similar correlations between the two regions (Bailey, 1997) (see Chapter 19 for a similar and possibly analogical pattern of evolution for ME u: (Wells' *Mouth* words) > [æu ~ æə] and, in the NW Midlands, [æ: ~ ɛ:]).

1.3 ME /i/ > [ɪ ~ i(·) ~ i:] (the Ancestor of *Kit* Words)

Görlach (2012, 598) remarks that the “spontaneous, unconditioned changes that occurred in the EME era were much less dramatic than the GVS or largescale reduction of diphthongs to monophthongs.” He goes on to point out that there is some debate about the exact nature of ME short /i/ in words such *bit*, *thin* and *give*, with some historical linguists arguing that close [i] had been centralized to [ɪ] as early as the Middle English period (Faiß, 1989, 33–34; Nevalainen, 2006, 124; Stockwell and Minkova, 1990, 2002, cited in Görlach, 2012).

Once again, my position is that it may simply have been centralized very early in some varieties, but certainly not in all. Lass (1999, 88), for instance, argues that this [i] survived into the 17th century. He provides the same late date for the laxing of [u] to [ʊ]. I shall argue below that both of these tense pronunciations were probably in more general use and survived far longer in the vernacular. Quite extraordinarily from a diachronic perspective, these tense forms of both [i] and [u] have co-existed in certain environments until the present day in regional American and British dialects (more on this below).

Cross-linguistically, John Morris-Jones (1922, 1) signals a similar tense pronunciation of short [i] in early 20th-century Welsh and makes parallels with a similar pronunciation in northern England at the time. In his discussion of the pronunciation of Welsh long [i:] in *gwin* [gwi:n] “wine” he explains that it sounded like the northern English *i* in “machine,” specifying that [i] is closer there than it is in southern English pronunciation. When it is short, as in *dim*, meaning “not” or “nothing,” “*it has the same sound* (my italics), and not the wider *i* as in English *dim*” (i.e. [ɪ]). Put another way, for Morris-Jones Welsh *dim* [dim] was pronounced as in French *dime* [i]. This is very likely the older Welsh pronunciation and not [dɪm], which is now commonly heard among many younger Welsh speakers, particularly in South Wales.

Early examples of the tensing and lengthening of ME /i/, i.e. [i] > [i-]/[i:] are found in Hart (1551/1569) who pronounces *give* [gi:v]. I have recorded “give”

5 For instance, while older speakers systematically pronounced words such as *bright*, *fright*, etc. with [i:], in more formal speech the same people would pronounce these words with [a:] which they considered to be more “correct.” /a:/ is still a pronunciation broadly heard throughout the North of England and in the American South.

as [gi:] (and unstressed *wi* [wi] for “with”) in Lancashire in the phrases such as *Gi’ it him* [‘gi: ɪt ‘ɪm] “Give it to him” (German, personal notes, Deane, Lancs). Wright (1905, 461-462) signals that it was still pronounced [gi:v] in Devonshire and [gi:] in Scotland at the turn of the 20th century. For Dorset, Burton (2010, 50) also has [gi:] as a pronunciation of “give” (along with *wi* [wi:] for “with”). In both cases the loss of [-v-] and final [ð] may have provoked compensatory lengthening (as with *light* [li:t], *bright* [bɹi:t] above). Nevertheless, the 18th century Massachusetts poet and theologian, Timothy Dwight, rhymes *gives* with both *leaves* and *perceives*, presumably with [i:~i:]. Elsewhere, however, he rhymes *leaves* and *perceives* using the older Type C1 realizations common to 17th century *Meat* and *Deceit* realizations (i.e. [ɛ:~ɛ:~ɛ:]).

Gil (1619) has *women* [‘wi:mɪn], presumably conserving the long [i:] of OE *wīfman*, while Coote (1596) pronounces *child* as both [tʃi:ld] or [tʃɪld] (Dobson, 1968, 478, 480), or is it [tʃɪld]? Mazarin cites evidence from the London poet Katherine Philips (b. 1632) whose:

mid-seventeenth century KIT /ɪ/ was so tense and peripheral that she felt comfortable rhyming it with FLEECE /i:/, so her rhyme *leaps–skips* actually confirms /li:p/ for *leap*. She also rhymes *seem–him*, *enrich–speech*, *grieve–live* ... (Mazarin, 2020, 18)

The question is whether these tense and possibly lengthened *Kit* vowels (/i/ > /i:/) involved “breaking” at this time (i.e. [i:~i:] > [ɪi:~i-i]) and, if so, whether the ultimate source might be found in English dialects. Again, *him*, *enrich* and *live* can still be heard with breaking in the American South: [hi-ɪm], [mɪɪ-ɪtʃ] and [li-ɪv]. Even under this form these words would rhyme quite well with *seem*, *speech* and *grieve* respectively. Lengthening and breaking are closely associated with “drawling,” a phenomenon that was widespread in rural New England and which both Franklin and Webster roundly condemned. Modern evidence provided by David Shores, a phonetician and native of Tangier Island in the Chesapeake Bay who has studied the dialect of his island for decades. Tangier Island is part of a region known as Tidewater, pronounced [‘tɔɪd,wɑ:tə], which extends from Maryland and Virginia Chesapeake regions down to the Outer Banks of North Carolina. The inhabitants are known locally as *Hoi Toiders* (“High Tiders”). Settled during the 1680s by West Country people, the inhabitants of Tangier Island, also known as Tangerines, speak a variety of English which contains numerous relics of 18th-century colonial American English. Shores presents evidence showing, for instance, that the opposition between /i:/ and /ɪ/ is neutralized before [tʃ] but also in other environments: *feel* ~ *fill*, *steal* ~ *still*, *heel* ~ *hill* and *peal* ~ *pill* each pair of which is homophonous and pronounced [i-ətʃ] (Shores, 1984, 45-46). In this case, one wonders whether Franklin and his compatriots shared a similar elongated pronunciation of lax /ɪ/ in his natural

speech and, if so, was it generalized to all environments or limited to a few examples? (See Shores pronunciation of *Fleece* and *Meat* words below.)

Krapp (1925, 113-114) provides some interesting support for the late survival of this lengthened, tense realization of ME /i:/ writing “It may be that the vowel (i.e. [i]) was formerly pronounced with a higher value, approximately as [i]. This would make *sin* [sin] a fairly close rime to *seen* [si:n], and rimes like this occur not infrequently in the verse of the later eighteenth century.” Perhaps without realizing it, Krapp cites the same minimal pairs used by Franklin in his RMS when he explains in the introduction to his system of transcription that the vowels of *seen* and *sin* shared the same quality and differed only in terms of length, hence [si:n] and [si:n ~ si:n] respectively (Franklin, 1779, 470b). Krapp’s observation is perhaps the earliest indication of American [i ~ i:] for /i/ during colonial times.

In the same description, Franklin provides another minimal pair opposing *diid* ~ *did*, “deed” and “did,” both apparently sharing the same tense [i]. Elsewhere, Krapp quotes Fenimore Cooper who has one of his characters pronouncing “did” as “diiid.”⁶

Interestingly, Wells (1989, 345) gives the English West Country pronunciation of *did* as having [dɪ:d] (but also [fla:ʃ] “flash,” [tɒ:p] “top,” [pʊ:s] “puss”). Pronunciations such as [di:ɪd], with breaking, are still common throughout the southern Appalachians and the American South more generally as well as in AAVE (cf. below). We have an example of this tense pronunciation of ME /i/ in the early 17th century in the Groton town records (Massachusetts), where the clerk writes *deed* [di:d] for “did” (1678). Another clerk writes it lowered and shortened [ɪ] > [ɛ], *ded* “did,” (Groton, 1691) (Orbeck, 1927, 32). The lowering of /i/ > [ɛ] suggests a starting point with lax [ɪ]. This feature has been associated with Suffolk speakers who constituted the greater part of the population of Boston in Franklin’s youth (Fischer, 1989).

Support for the late existence of this tense pronunciation appears in William Barnes’ *Grammar of Dorset English* (Gachelin, 1981; Burton, 2010, 47-48), in which Barnes describes two distinct pronunciations of the *Kit* vowel. The first is a tense /i/ which he classifies as “Type 1,” examples being, *pin*, *spin*, and *wit* which he claims are pronounced like the <-y> of *beauty* and *duty* [i] (i.e., Wells’ <happy> vowel). His “Type 2” words are pronounced [ɪ] with key words such as *dip*, *ditty*, *fit*, *hit*, *pipkin* and *busy*. Burton views these as allophones of /i/ adding that “I have not found this distinction made by other writers on 19th century English” (Burton, 2010, 46-48). Nevertheless, he concludes that, with the possible exception of Alexander Ellis (1869) who “observed more phonetic distinctions

6 If so, the opposite logic should be applied to the history of short ME /i/, namely, under what conditions was it lax to [ɪ]?

than the speakers were aware,” other commentators may simply not have heard or paid attention to this distinction. Burton, quoting Elsworthy, claims that *Kit* words could have as many as six realizations in West Somerset in the 1870s: /i:/, /i/, /ɪ/ and three modified forms of /ɪ/ with allophones “tending towards /ə/ and /ʊ/ (Burton, 2010, 47). Similar fluctuations will be discussed below.

Whatever the merits of these observations, it is therefore probable that both [i(:)] and [ɪ] coexisted in various dialects far longer than has been imagined. It is also highly likely to have been part of the original feature pool, not only in the southern colonies where it is widespread, but also in New England and Pennsylvania. The source of this feature would thus appear to be English and not an American innovation. This conclusion is supported by other English evidence provided above.

In America, Lowell’s *Biglow Papers* (1848) also confirm this pronunciation for Massachusetts with [i(:)] for [ɪ] for “little” which he too spells *leetle* [li:tɫ] as well as *creeter* for “creature.” I have only ever heard [kɹɪtəɹ] in Appalachia and in Virginia. Wright (1905, 391) gives pronunciations such as [kɹɛ:təɹ] for Scotland, Shropshire and [kɹiətəɹ] for Scotland, Durham and southwest Yorkshire.

The lengthening of ME short /i/ is confirmed by Hall (1942, 14-15) who writes, “[ɪ] is unstable, as in much of English regional speech; it has a tendency both to diphthongize (i.e. what I call “breaking”) slightly and to vacillate between raised and lowered sounds: *cliff* [kli:f], *chin* [tʃi:n], *ridge* [ɹi:ɪdʒ].” Given that Hall, like some American phoneticians, does not indicate vowel length, I have done so based on my own experience.

He cites an array of Smoky Mountain sources, mostly from the 19th century, with an <ee> spelling, all of which suggest pronunciations in [i] or [i:], reflecting [i(:)], such as *greased peeg* [pi:g] for “pig,” *steek* for “stick,” *leetle* [li:tɫ] for “little,” *deestric* [di:stɹɪk] for “district,” *eetch* [i:tʃ] “itch,” *keeck* [ki:k] “kick” and *reaver* [ɹi:vəɹ] for “river” as well as *dish* with [i(:)]. The spelling of *creek* may reflect a trace of this tendency in RP and GA.⁷ He transcribes raised [i] in *fifty*, *live* (Hall, 1942, 15). Contrast these pronunciations with ME /i/ > [ɛ] so typical of 17th-century Suffolk and London-area pronunciations. Consider here Polly Stevenson’s transcription of “edition” in the RMS which, in 1779, Vaughan presents as *iidifyn*, that is, [i:ˈdɪfən] but as *idifyn* [iˈdɪfən] in her 1768 draft letter to Franklin. Here I have given the value of the short stressed vowel as [ɪ].

Along wide stretches of the American southeastern seaboard, long [i:] can

7 The Groton Records (Mass.) and Easthampton Records (NY) have *cricks* for *creeks* (1648) and, if Krapp is correct, this was the universal pronunciation of the word in North America at the time. Borrowed into English with its French pronunciation as *crique* [krik], the <ee> orthography could possibly reflect an early quantitative lengthening of ME [i] to ME [i:] on one hand, and the lowering of ME [i] > [ɪ] on the other, giving the two modern forms: *creek* [kɹi:k] and *crick* [kɹɪk]. Similarly, Hodges spells “week” as *wick*, pronounced [wɪk] or [wik] (cf. Dobson, 1968, 477).

be heard before [ʃ], a phenomenon that has been recorded in Okracoke, North Carolina by Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (1997, 110) and Tangier Island in the Chesapeake Bay (Shores, 1984). I have noted this feature in words such as *fish* [fi:ʃ], *dish* [di:ʃ] and *wish* [wi:ʃ] in southeastern Ohio (Jackson Co.)⁸ and in the Shenandoah Valley (Quicksburg, Virginia) (German, personal notes).

For Tennessee, Hall (1942, 15) notes the following example in context: “I seed a fish yon long and yon round” [a 'si:d ə 'fiʃ jæn 'lɔŋ ŋjæn 'æʊnd]. My transcription of “fish” and “long” would be with a long close tense [i:], and [ɒ:] or even [ɒ] respectively. As for Hall’s transcription of *yon* as [jæn], this was a common realization of the word during the 16th and 17th century that was sanctioned by John Cheke, who spelt it *ien* (circa. 1540). This point will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 19 and 20 (New England short o).

Returning to England, Shorrocks (1998, 169) gives the following examples for Bolton, Lancs: “fish” [fi:ʃ], “dishcloth” [di:ʃklɔ:θ], “wish” [wi:ʃ]... As mentioned previously, the same kind of lengthening occurs with [ʊ]/[u] before [ʃ] in the same regions of England and America (cf. [ʊ] in Chapter 18), a feature that typifies early New England speech as well. This kind of lengthening before [ʃ] has been recorded in the Northwest English Midlands (SED) in the same words, suggesting that the feature could have a source in the Midlands or South of England.

This [i:] pronunciation before /ʃ/ is thus clearly old and, given English dialectal parallels with American relic areas, it was obviously present in the early colonists’ vernacular speech (cf. the section on the origins of breaking below). The SED records examples of long vowels here where one would have expected short ones.

Nevertheless, for Dobson (1968, 569), ME short /i/ was universally a lax low vowel [ɪ]. Although he is probably right that this was the dominant pronunciation in large parts of England, there is no guarantee that this was the case for basilectal speakers, many of whom, as we have seen, continued to use the [i ~ i:] form for much longer than has been supposed. It is a matter of speculation whether Franklin indulged in this kind of lengthening in his natural speech, but it seems very probable that he did.

Nevertheless, Dobson (1968, 544) allows for what he assumes to be the “raising” of [ɪ] to [i] (rather than as an archaism) before [ŋ], [n], [ç] and [l]. In the modern American vernacular, for instance, I have noted a range of pronunciations for “thing:” [θɪŋ] but also [θɪŋ], [θɛŋ] (southern Ohio) and [θæ:ŋ] (Appalachia and South), each pronunciation with its own history (see *lingth* and *lankth* variants for “length” in the 17th-century New York records below).

The nature of the reflexes of ME /i/ between the 16th century and 18th century

8 This is only a few miles from the Kentucky and West Virginia borders.

was thus unstable to say the least (cf. Hall's definition of GA /ɪ/) and this is reflected by the somewhat erratic lowering, raising, shortening and lengthening of not only ME /i/ but the other ME short vowels.

1.3.1 ME *i* + <c> [iç], [itʃ], [ʌtʃ]

Ic, the Old English first person subject pronoun, “I,” developed into [iç], [iʃ], [itʃ] with laxed counterparts. If Dobson (1968, 671) is right, [iç] survived in spoken English in words like *sigh* and *sight* until about 1650 which suggests that conservative speakers were still pronouncing it this way during the earliest stages of the settlement of colonial America. This will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 23. Krapp (1925: 190) points out 19th-century American pronunciations of “sigh” spelt *syth* or, in the *New England Dictionary* (Murray, 1888), spelt *sife*.

As seen above, it had at least two major variants, [ɛi] and, by the early to mid-1600s, alongside the centralized variant [əi]. The [ai] realization appears to have been more common in the North Midland varieties, but we have seen that [ai] and the other variants examined above were also present with [ɛi] being dominant in the Massachusetts and Virginia settlements (founded in 1620 and 1607 respectively). It would seem that [əi] grew in popularity, perhaps associated with a prestigious London pronunciation as the century went on. For other speakers, I have suggested the progressive shift from [ɛi] > [æi] > [ai].

OE *Ic* “I” was probably realized as a palatalized form of [ikʰ] (= [ikj]) and, from here, it transformed into the palato-dorsal affricate [tʃ], a pronunciation which survived in Dorset and Somerset until the 20th century. It was pronounced [ʌtʃ] (< OE *Ic* > “I”), with a centralized vowel, and consequently was nicknamed the “Land of Utch” by the linguist Alexander Ellis. It functioned either as a free morpheme [ʌtʃ] or as an enclitic, [tʃ-], which was prefixed to the following model verb. Shakespeare’s playful use of this feature (*chill* “I will,” *chud* “I would”) appears in the mouth of Edgar, one of the characters of *King Lear* (1619) (Act IV, Scene 6, lines 237-247):⁹ “Chill not let go, zir, without vurther cagion (“occasion”) or An chud ha’ bin zwagger’d out of my life...” (Alexander, 1971, 1105). Note also the voicing of /f/ and /s/ here that we noted in Leith’s passage (cf. Chapter 10, Leith, 1898). In Chapter 11, we saw Viereck and Wakelyn’s surprise that such “gross dialectal traits” either “did not cross the Atlantic” or have since “disappeared.”

In passing, also note Shakespeare’s use of “Ice” for “I se” (i.e. “I shall”) in this passage which some historical linguists have claimed disappeared shortly after this time: “Ice (I shall) try whether your costard (“head”), or my Bat be

9 See https://shakespeare-navigators.com/king_lear/King_Lear_Act_4_Scene_6.html

the harder;” “Chill be plain with you” (ibid.). I recorded “I se” used by a dialect speaker (Deane, Bolton, Lancashire, dialect), born in 1921, in the following example: [as br 'gy·m, nɛ:], “I shall be going now.” This is another telling example showing the concordance between diachronic, dialectological and synchronic studies. The remarkable conservatism encountered in Modern English dialects is another testimony to Ihalainen’s (1994) remarks and to which I shall refer throughout this book.

Note also that Mary Robinson records <se> in Scots, adding that it is also a reduced form of *sall* “shall” that is appended “only after personal pronouns” (i.e. as an enclitic) (Robinson, 1985, 579).

“Utch” was certainly already stigmatized in Shakespeare’s day, since he chose to use it in *King Lear* to identify a southwestern speaker. This supposition seems to be confirmed by the fact that “utch” does not appear (to my knowledge) in formal texts. This and similar pronunciations for “I” were certainly common in Virginia, where settlers from Somerset and Dorset were particularly numerous, but also in Massachusetts during the second phase of settlement. For the reasons given in Chapters 10, 11 and 12, strongly localized basilectal pronunciations such as [ʌtʃ] were rarely retained in the New World since they were too intimately associated with the close-knit rural communities which used them back in England. Nevertheless, J. Smith recorded a woman from Merriott, Somerset, in 1967:

Her husband would say to her, “Bess, utch’m gwain¹⁰ down zo var’s the ground, an’ if thee hasn’t a mind to come thee ca’st bide ’ome,” which translates as: “Bess, I’m going down as far as the field, and if you haven’t a mind to come you can stay at home.” (J. B. Smith, “Echoes from the Land of Utch,” 71)

These features had little chance of survival in North America on account of the “sharedness principle.” This concept, which I proposed in Chapters 11 and 12, is the idea that most speakers composed mainly of eastern or southeastern English settlers would have considered these features as errant characteristics of fringe varieties of English. For that reason, they would have purposely shunted to the side.

Franklin, however, explicitly proposes what appears to be [əi ~ ʔi] as the appropriate pronunciation of *Price* words pronunciation for his RMS model in his 1768 orthographic reform (cf. Appendix 2 for the original 1768 table). (Henceforth, I shall only transcribe this as [əi]). This was almost certainly the realization of *Choice* words too. Once again, this is borne out by the New England poets Barlow, Dwight and Franklin (in his *Poor Richard’s Almanack*) who systematically rhyme words such as *tile* ~ *toil*, *bile* ~ *boil*, all pronounced

¹⁰ Note that “gwain” is also a characteristic associated with 19th-century AAVE. Burton points out that Barnes pronounced “going” is always [gwæm], which was common throughout the Southwest of England. This is commonly heard in older AAVE.

[ɹi ~ əi]. Lowell does the same by the mid-19th century but, by his time, he may have already pronounced it [ai] or a variant of it. These also figure among the examples of “imperfect” rhymes that I calculated in the analysis of Franklin poems and those of his fellow New England poets (cf. Chapter 15). Orton and Tilling (1971, 1287) also give [Δi] as the transcription of “I” for Norfolk, which is where Franklin’s maternal grandparents were from. This account demonstrates that they were indeed perfect rhymes for New Englanders.

1.3.2 ME *i* + <gh>

Another peripheral example of this kind is ME short *i* + <gh> /x/ presents an interesting case in light of what has just been said. It was pronounced [x] after low front vowels and back vowels. Following high front vowels, it was pronounced as [ç], a voiceless fricative. Nevertheless, /x/ was preserved in England for centuries after low front vowels and back vowels until the early 18th century. Indeed, citing evidence from the SED for Hartwood (Orton & Halliday, 1962-1963, I, 24), Shorrocks states that [x] survived in Lancashire until the mid-20th century under the form of [xf] (Shorrocks, 1998, 402-403).

Isaac Newton (d. 1727) also advocated its use in his little-known pronunciation guide (circa 1660-1661). Had Franklin met him in Batson’s Coffee-house in 1725 as had been planned, he would certainly have heard him pronouncing it in this manner. Indeed, /x/ survives to this day in conservative Scots words such as “light” [lɪçt], “bright” [brɪçt]... but also “thought” [θɔçt] (see Robinson’s *The Concise Dictionary of Modern Scots*, 1985, for more examples).

In medial position, [i] + <gh> /x/ + C was elided over time in many regions which led to compensatory lengthening [i:], but in this environment was not subject to the GVS. This pronunciation was common in the Northwest Midlands and in the North of England more generally until recently. In conservative Lancashire speech, for instance, “how are you” is expressed as [‘æ:t ə’ji:t] “Art all right?” as well as *light* [li:t], *bright* [bri:t] but [‘feɪtɪn] for *fighting* (German, personal notes, Deane, Lancs.). As indicated above, in more formal situations, the same speakers will pronounce these words as [a:] or [a’] with *light*, *right*, *bright* pronounced [la:t], [ra:t], [bɹa:t] or [la:’t], [ra:’t], [bɹa:’t] (German, Deane, Lancs.) thus confirming Joseph Wright’s observation that working class speakers also have disparitary and paritary registers of their own (Wright, 1905). How old the latter pronunciations are is difficult to determine (cf. Gil’s statement above). Shorrocks (1998) also systematically provides multiple variants for each word he cites that he has noted in the city of Bolton alone.

We saw in Chapter 12 that the bulk of the Pennsylvania and Delaware Quakers were from the Northwest Midlands and the North more generally and they would certainly have shared these characteristics. Given that, in the 1730s,

the Assembly was largely composed of first and second-generation Quakers, and nearly all the House, Franklin was exposed to such accents from the age of seventeen on. It is virtually certain that some of these would have lapsed back into their regional paritary basilects among themselves. One wonders to what degree their accents may have influenced his own. From the poetic rhymes I have studied I would conclude that their impact on his English was minimal.

For reasons of “natural selection” or rather “social selection,” such [li:t, b.ɪ:t, ɹi:t] pronunciations never stood a chance of survival in New England (or elsewhere in America) where the dominant pronunciation remained [ɛi] and or [ʌi ~ əi ~ ʏi] until well into the 19th century and early 20th century for the latter. We have seen that Franklin’s older family members born in Northamptonshire may have pronounced *Price* words with [ʌi], just as it is today according to the *Survey of English Dialects*. The disparitary pronunciation that Franklin appears to have adopted was [ləit, b.ɹəit, ɹəit] or a Massachusetts variant of this, [lɹit, b.ɹɹit, ɹɹit]. However, it appears to be the London [əi ~ ʌi] variant of this pronunciation that he proposes in his RMS (Chapter 25). I would wager that [ai] pronunciations were also making inroads at this time, but I have found no orthographic evidence of this to date in the colonial town records to confirm this. To repeat, although the feature was recessive, Wise (1948, 118) confirms that this pronunciation lingered on until at least the mid-20th century: “This value of the diphthong has persisted even to the present time in some areas, as in rural Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island; and as Shewmaker records, in Virginia.”

For all these reasons, these and other features were certainly part of the feature pool, if only peripherally, during the first one hundred years of settlement. And even if large numbers of dialect speakers continued to use these pronunciations in Britain until recent times, for the sociolinguistic and demographic reasons presented in Chapters 1, 11 and 12, the most stigmatized and localized aspects of dialect speech (in conjunction with the “sharedness principle”) were never adopted as part of the regional American koines and were progressively expunged from the feature pool.

2. New England /i/ [ɪ ~ i(·) ~ i:]

We have already examined several indicators above which strongly suggest that tense ME /i/ was lengthened to [i:], and perhaps even to [i:] (and with breaking [i-ɪ]) in specific environments. This feature was strongly implanted in the colonial feature pool among many others and preserved in paritary (later stigmatized) registers of the colonial koines. Barlow and Dwight offer rhymes which seem to show that the lengthening of ME /i/ was a characteristic of 18th-century New England English too and perfectly acceptable to them. Nevertheless, there is

no telling whether the poets are simply disregarding quantitative distinctions between /i/ and /i:/. For instance, how does one interpret Dwight's *dream* ~ *whim*? For reasons explained earlier, it appears that Dwight's pronunciation in this regard was somewhat innovative, involving *Meat* words with an /i:/ pronunciation of *dream* [dɹi:m] and, perhaps, a tense and perhaps lengthened realization of *whim* as ~ [wi:(ɪ)m].¹¹ I can propose no definitive answer here. Note that elsewhere, "dream" sometimes is often pronounced [dɹɛ:m ~ dɹæ:m] (cf. Chapters 17 and 18).

As previously mentioned, Franklin also gives a number of examples suggesting that he too may have had a raised, tense [i:] pronunciation rather than lax [ɪ], at least in certain environments. The most striking examples of this are his rhymes of *deep* ~ *ship* and *seen* ~ *in*. If *deep* was pronounced [i:], was *ship* realized as [ʃɪp], making this an approximate rhyme, or was it [ʃi:p] or even [ʃi:ɪp] with breaking? We have already mentioned that he considered the vowels of *seen* and *sin* as well as *deed* and *did* to have been distinguished only by their quantity. If so, one wonders whether the vowel of *in* was realized as [m], [i:n] or, for some speakers, even [i:m]?

If so, this would confirm Krapp's conclusion that, during the colonial period, there was much greater phonological unity between the northern and southern American vernaculars during the formative, founder-generation period than is the case today. In other words, the southern varieties of American English appear to have conserved numerous features of the older phonological system that were once shared by the colonial New Englanders.

2.1 ME /i/ > /əi/: Miscellaneous Examples

Along the same lines, Mazarin (2020) indicates that Katherine Philips felt confident to rhyme *grieve* [gɹi:v] ~ *live* [li:(·)v ~ li:(·)v?] (vb). Once again, American southerners (and AAVE) still pronounce it with breaking [li:ɪv]. The New England poets appear to have taken this long realization of the verb *live* a step further pronouncing it [ləiv]. The explanation for this seems to be that, for some speakers, *live* [li:v ~ li:v] merged with other *Price* words and was caught up in the GVS (ME /i:/ > /əi/ [əi ~ ɹi ~ ɹi]). This evolved pronunciation appears to have been [ləiv] in the 18th century and may have taken this form on analogy with the adjective *live* [ləiv] and noun *life* [ləif]). Numerous examples are furnished by the New Englanders' poems, where the verb *live* [ləiv] is made to rhyme with *thrive* [θɹəiv], *derive* [dɹi'əiv], *strive* [stɹəiv], *hive* [həiv], *drive* [dɹəiv], *revive* [ɹi'vəiv], *survive* [səɹ'vəiv], *arrive* [ə'ɹəiv]...

11 Although both Franklin (RMS, 1768/1779) and Webster (1789) argue in favour of the pronunciation of [hw-], it was not commonly heard in New England. However, it was and still is widespread in the South.

The most interesting case of this kind of phenomenon is the apparent [əi] pronunciation of the endings in *-ly*, *-ty*, *-ie*, *-y*, particularly in the first lyrical poem ever composed by Franklin, entitled “The Taking of Teach the Pirate,” which was published in 1719 when he was only thirteen. In it he offers a remarkable rhyme involving *manfully* ~ *die*. The fact that he should use such rhymes spontaneously at such a young age implies that it was part of his natural speech or, at the very least, that he was able to code-switch at will between higher and lower registers.

Teach and Maynard on the Quarter,
Fought it out most *manfully*,
Maynard’s Sword did cut him shorter,
Losing his head, he there did *die*.

In his *Autobiography*, as an old man, he recalled this piece describing it as a “wretched stuff, in the Grub-street-ballad style” (BF, p. 15). Franklin’s father scorned it for its lowly English pronunciation, saying that ballads of this kind were only composed by “beggars.” Here again is another example of how “low” language is associated with people at the bottom end of the social hierarchy.

Nevertheless, there are only two apparent choices here: either *manfully* ~ *die* form an exact rhyme or they do not. In the first case *-ly* and *die* would either be pronounced [di:], unlikely in New England English, or [dəi]. The fact that Franklin has *die* [dəi] rhyme with *fry* [fɹəi] in his poem sometimes entitled “Death is a Fisherman” (*Poor Richard’s Almanack*, 1733), makes the [əi] pronunciation the most likely.

Initially, I believed he may have been imitating the speech of New England broad vernacular speakers to fit the topic of the ballad. But, as we shall see in his RMS, he gives three examples of <-ly> and <-y> which he transcribes with *yi* and, to simplify matters, I interpret to the value of his *Price* words here to be [əi] (and not [əi ~ ʌi ~ ɹi]). These are almost certainly inadvertent slips back into his natural pronunciation, which does not conform to the London-based RMS model which he systematically transcribes as *i* [i].

Mazarin (2020, 17), quoting Donne’s elegy “To his Mistress” (circa. 1593) points out that he makes use of rhymes such as *memory–me*, *flattery–be*, *company–be*, *thee–gallery*” and adds “*Price* only once, in the awkward and artificial rhyme (my italics) *I–constancy*, pronounced /əi, -səi/.” Considering the large number the [əi] rhymes of this kind by Franklin, and by other English poets of the time (including Pope, cf. Chapters 23 and 24), I am convinced that these were not artificial rhymes at all for him and that this probably reflects a common pronunciation at this time. The question is whether words like *me*, *be*, *thee*, etc. were also realized with an [əi] diphthong (see below).

In support of this hypothesis, Dobson (1968, 843-845) writes that the [-ləi] pronunciation of stressed and unstressed *-ly* suffixes was frequent among the

orthoepists during the 16th and 17th centuries and he cites Gil, Robinson and others as having used them naturally. Dobson (1968, 997) records Hart writing *whoali*, *hoali* (in his manuscript, Chapter 13) but also *huolei* “wholly,” the latter example in his *Orthographie* and which Dobson transcribes (1968, 509) as [‘hwɔləi]. In light of my analysis of ME /i:/ above and Orbeck’s Massachusetts examples, it may well have been [‘hwɔləi]. On the other hand, he gives [hwɔ:l] for “whole (Dobson, 1968, 509). We shall also see in Chapters 21 and 22 that this is one of the key words observers have identified as having “New England short o” where “whole” was pronounced [hɔl] (cf. Grandgent, 1899, 217). “Whole” is spelt <holl> by Lowell in 1848 with “New England short o.”

In his study of Hart’s *Orthographie*, Jespersen (1907, 90) lists numerous spellings, a number of which occur side-by-side with [li] pronunciations.

<i>boldlei</i>	<i>prezentlei</i>
<i>sertenlei</i>	<i>singulerlei</i>
<i>komodiuzei</i>	<i>birdlei/birdli</i>
<i>komonlei/komonli</i>	<i>prulei</i> (thoroughly)
<i>espesialei/espesiali</i>	<i>triulei/triuli</i>
<i>indifrentlei/indifrentli</i>	<i>uniformlei</i>
<i>namlei</i>	<i>verelei</i>
<i>partlei</i>	<i>huolei</i> (wholly)
<i>perfetlei/perfetli</i>	

I would argue that Hart was too good a phonetician to have confused [əi] and [ɛi] and I would wager that this was [ɛi] or a variant thereof was his most likely realization of it. Mazarin (2020, 18) contrasts Shakespeare’s pronunciation of final <y> with *Price* words in *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, noting that he pronounces <y> six times with a *Price* diphthong and only once with a *Fleece* vowel. He goes on to point out that Donne’s elegy “On his Mistress” favours four rhymes with *Fleece* vowels and only one rhyme with a *Price* realization.

The *Price* rhymes with *Happy* words are frequent in Franklin’s *Poor Richard’s Almanack* poems, demonstrating that these pronunciations were part and parcel of his natural Boston pronunciation. In Chapters 26 and 27 of Part IV, we shall see three examples of this kind which slipped into his RMS transcriptions (1768/1779) including *perfektui*, literally [pɛɪfɛktləi], but probably in natural speech as well, while older conservative speakers may still have pronounced these with [ɛi] as in Hart’s lifetime. The fact that examples appear in his RMS suggests that he must have pronounced it this way all his life, even while in London. In his September 28, 1768 letter to Stevenson, however, he “corrects”

this word to *purfektli* ['pəʃfektli], with both centralization and a final [i] monophthong.

The following examples present no problem, because when -ly or -y are stressed, the pronunciation is [ɹi] (versus London /Δi/ [Δi ~ əi]).

deny [di'nɹi] ~ *lie* [li] (1734)

rely [ɹɛ'lɹi] ~ *die* [di] (1738)

comply [kəm'plɹi] ~ *I* [ɹi] (1738)

supply [sə'plɹi] ~ *die* [di] (1742)

supply [sə'plɹi] ~ *eye* [ɹi] (1748)

eye [ɹi] ~ *awry* [a'ɹɹi] (1750), etc.

On the other hand, unstressed -y, -ity, -etry endings are also rhymed with stressed [ɹi] words:

high [hɹi] ~ *family* ['fæmɪləi] (1734)

eye [ɹi] ~ *finery* ['fəinərəi] (1750)

lie [li] ~ *posterity* [pɒs'tɛ.ɪtəi] (1757)

die [di] ~ *deformity* [dɛ'fɔɹmɪtəi] (1757)

high [hɹi] ~ *symmetry* ['sɪmɪtɹəi] (1757)

try [tɹɹi] ~ *sincerity* [sɪn'sɛ.ɪtəi] (1757)

Support for this is provided by some other rhymes by John Donne (1572-1631) in his poem "The Legacie" (1994, 10-11): *dye* ~ *eternity*, *I* ~ *legacie* alongside *Divinity* ~ *see*... During the 16th century, we may well be dealing with earlier [ɛi ~ ɛi] which would tie in quite well with Hart's transcriptions above (cf. Lass, 1999 above who argues in favour of [ɛi]), hence [di'vɪnɪtɛi] [sɛɪ ~ sɛi]? Thomas Grey (1742, 1747), a contemporary of Franklin, makes the same kind of rhymes: *ply* ~ *liberty*, *high* ~ *infamy* in his "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College" (cf. Bradley & Price, 1962, 220-223). Here is another sign of continuity between English varieties and New England English.

As we have seen above, Franklin (and all the other 18th-century and early 19th-century American poets) also rhymes *Choice* [əi] and *Price* words with these unstressed suffixes with a slightly diphthongized [əi], an example being seen in his 1734 edition of his *Poor Richard's Almanack*: *destroy* [des'tɹəi] ~ *vanity* ['væni,təi] further reinforcing the hypothesis that [əi] was his natural pronunciation, not [ɔi].

Nevertheless, in the final stanzas of his Blackbeard ballad, he rhymes -ly

with *see* which, in this case, one might expect to be pronounced [li] ~ [si:]. Accordingly, the question is whether he pronounced *see* as [i:] or as a slightly diphthongized [əi ~ ɛi], in which case, the rhyme would be *see* [səi ~ səi] ~ *courageously* [kə're:dʒəs,ləi]. In theory, this is not impossible considering that diphthongized realizations of [sei] for *see* are recorded by Wright (1905, 588) in Northamptonshire (Franklin's paternal ancestors' home) and also Cheshire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Shropshire and Suffolk. As I have already indicated on several occasions, 59% of 17th-century Bostonians originated from Suffolk and Essex and further 10% from adjacent regions of London.

Wounded Men on both Sides fell, Sir,

'T was a doleful Sight to *see*, [səit ~ səi ~ səi]

Nothing could their Courage quell, Sir,

O, they fought *courageously*. [ləi?]

As suggested above, an alternative hypothesis is that Franklin's pronunciation of *me*, *thee*, *degree*, *free*, etc. may have had a diphthongal [əi] quality :

<i>me</i>	[məi] ~ <i>curiositie</i>	[k(j)u.ɹi'bsɪtəi] (1746)
<i>degree</i>	[dɪ'gɹəi] ~ <i>simplicity</i>	[sɪm'plɪsɪtəi] (1750)
<i>free</i>	[fɹəi] ~ <i>jollity</i>	[ˈdʒɒlɪtəi] (1750)
<i>free</i>	[fɹəi] ~ <i>eternity</i>	[e'tɛ.ɪnɪtəi] (1751)
<i>thee</i>	[ðəi] ~ <i>eternity</i>	[e'tɛ.ɪnɪtəi] (1751)

Given the number of obvious examples of [əi] rhymes in stressed as well as in unstressed <ly>, <ry>, <ty>, <try> syllables, it cannot be entirely ruled out that [əi] was also the pronunciation of his *Fleece* words and that this was a primary characteristic of Franklin's natural speech.

David Shores (1984, 45-46) shows some interesting evidence on Tangier Island where pronunciations such as *three*, *grease*, *bean*, *fever*, *beach* are realized as [əi:] showing that this possibility is at least plausible on comparative grounds.

Finally, in a similar vein, in this same 1719 poem, Franklin also rhymes *Virginia* with *many* which, on the face of it, does not match.

Thus they sailed to *Virginia*,
And when they the Story told,
How they kill'd the Pirates *many*,
They'd Applause from young and old.

Here, however, the orthography of “Virginia” masks a pronunciation that was *Virginny* [vəɹˈdʒɪni] (or [vəɹˈdʒɪnəɪ?]), a pronunciation that was common until recently. In this case, the <y> of *many* had to have been presumably [i]. In this case, it is improbable that the rhymed vowels represent [əɪ]. *Virginny* [vəɹˈdʒɪni] is still heard today on occasion with this pronunciation, it is perceived as dated and substandard. It is now used for humorous effect or affectively by native Virginians as in “ole Virginny.”

2.2 ME /i/ > [ɛ ~ ɐ ~ ɛ]

The instability of ME i [i ~ ɪ] is confirmed by frequent lowering of lax vowels. One example of this is the lowering of [ɪ] > [ɛ]. Görlach (2012, 598) states that this characteristic occurred in a number of dialects including London English. Dobson (1968, 566-567) cites 16th- and 17th-century orthoepists as recording [ɛ] for [ɪ]. Coote (1596) the head master of a grammar school at Bury St Edmonds, Suffolk, describes [ɛ] in *mell* for “mill,” *hell* for “hill,” *knet* for “knit,” *bredge* for “bridge” as “the barbarous speech of your country people.” Daines (1640) also speaks of “mill,” “hill” and “bridge” with [ɛ] in Suffolk (Dobson, 1968, 567).

These Suffolk examples are particularly pertinent in that we have seen that this county contributed many settlers to the Massachusetts colony during the earliest period. Orbeck (1927, 32) in particular, but also Krapp (1925, 115), cites numerous examples of this kind of variation in the New England and New York town records, demonstrating that this 16th- and 17th-century characteristic of English was also common among older speakers in Massachusetts in Franklin’s day.

The Massachusetts town records give a large range of Suffolk pronunciations. Nevertheless, we shall examine examples showing a general tendency to raise ME /ɛ/ > /ɪ/ [ɪ ~ i ~ i· ~ i-ɪ?] (cf. Chapter 18, *pin-pen* merger; Chapter 12 for the discussion on koineization). The Watertown Records (Mass.), for instance, have *defference* in place of “difference” (1647), *henges* for “hinges” (1657), *sells* for “sills,” *begen* for “begin,” *bredg* for “bridge,” *medle* for “middle” (1669), *enventory* for “inventory” (1671), *enstant* for “instant” (1673), *geven* for “given” (1673), *phezick* for “physic” (1675), *leburty* for “liberty” (1677), and *fenished* for “finished” (1679), signs of London-area pronunciations.

The Plymouth records (Massachusetts) give *lettles* for “little,” *rever* for “river”¹² *sence* for “since” (as does Lowell, 200 years later), *Prence* for “Prince,” *wedth* and *wedth* for “width” and *betwext* for “betwixt” (no dates given here). The Dedham records give *breng* for “bring” (1636), *wedowe* for “widow” and *commeted* for committed while the Groton Records have *Skener* for “Skinner”

12 These words are also spelt <ee> and pronounced [i:] both in New England and in the southern states (cf. Hall, 1942, and Lowell, 1848).

(1664), *indeferent* for “indifferent” (1665), *wretten* for “written” (1665), *melle* for “mill” (1665), *Smethe* for “Smith” (1681), *nek* for “nick” (1681) (see Krapp, 1925, 116); *leueng* for “living” (1682), *reuer* for “river” (1682), *bredg* for “bridge” (1682), *untele* for “until” (1683), *bells* for “bills” (1691); *Screptur* for “Scripture” (1704), *menister* for “minister” (1702) (Görlach, 2012, 598 cites *menyster* “minister” and *cete* “for city” as London examples), *letell* for “little” (1706); *shellings* for “shillings” (1705) and *begening* for “beginning” (1705). Huntington records (NY) has *mell* for “mill” (1660) and *betterly* for “bitterly” (1668) (Krapp, 1925, 115).

Krapp (1925, 116) also quotes an interesting phrase from the Plymouth records which gives the flavour of the local speech at the time: “*Thare is a high Way Reserved ... for parsons (i.e., persons) to Travel In winter seson When the snow leys in drefts*” (1710)... [ðæɪ/ðeɪ ɪz e ˈheɪweɪ rɛˈzeɪvd fɔɪ ˈpæɪsənz tɔ ˈtɪævəl ɪn ˌwɪntəɪ ˈsɛːzən (h)wɛn ðə ˈsnɔː ˌlɛːz ɪn ˈdrefts] (my transcription). Elsewhere in these records, “highways” is spelt “hay ways” [heɪ weɪ] (Watertown, 1662) (Orbeck, 1927, 50).

Lowell’s *Biglow Papers* (1848) show systematic transcriptions of a specific class of words around Boston, Massachusetts, in the early 19th century with the lowering of [ɪ] > [ɛ]: *ef* [ɛf] for “if,” *ez* [ɛz] for “is,” *tell* [tɛl] for “till,” *sence* [sɛns] for “since” (cf. Plymouth records above). Note that the Southold records (NY) also have *sythence* [sɪˈðens] in 1682 (> [sɛns]), an archaic form of “since.”

Finally, as noted previously, southern American English, RP/GA [ɪŋ] (alongside [ɪn]) is often pronounced [ɛŋ] today and, very commonly [æːŋ] in words such as *sing*, *king*, *thing* and *wing* (the latter much to the delight of northern male adolescents!). For the Smokies, Hall (1942, 16) records *drink*, *string*, *finger*, *hinder*, *ink* all with [ɛɪ] or [ɛ]. I have also noted this [ɛ] pronunciation in southeastern Ohio (Jackson Co.) for “thing” and “ring” while Shorrocks (1998, 222) also gives examples such as [sθɪɛŋ] for *string*. Burton (2010, 49) cites the 19th-century Somerset poet, James Jennings (1825), who also spells *bring*, *drink*, *ink*, *think*, *thing* with an <e>. One must assume that these pronunciations were part and parcel of the New England feature pool (cf. the *pin-pen* merger, Chapter 18).

2.3 Lowering of ME /i/ + [ɪ] > [ɛɪ] > [æɪ]

Variation was the rule, with ME [i ~ ɪ] + [ɪ] being lowered to [ɛɪ ~ ɛɪ] and even [æɪ]. There are many examples of this process provided by the 17th- and 18th-century orthoepists and the New England and New York records. Gil (1619) gives “mirth” [mɛɪθ] and Hart (1551/1569) has [ʃɛɪt] for “shirt.” Coles (1674) has *skirt* and *birth* pronounced [skɛɪt] and [bɛɪθ] respectively (but see Lowell’s *barthright* [ˈbæɪθɪɪt] (1848), and also Duponceau (1818, 252), who transcribes “bird” as [bæɪd]).

Levins, a Yorkshireman, notes [kɛn] for “kin,” and pronounces “tilth” as [tɛlθ]

which he then rhymes with *stealth*, *health* and *wealth*, presumably with short [ɛ] (the last three words rendered with [ɛ:] by other orthoepists) (Dobson, 1968, 568-569).¹³ Burton (2010) cites evidence from Barnes' poetry (1844) showing that *mirth*, *birth* and *earth* were still pronounced (but with r-loss) [mɛθ], [bɛθ] and [ɛθ] (more on this below). As we shall see, the pronunciation of <ir> words as [ɛɪ] remained the model for Noah Webster well into the 19th century.

For instance, the Huntington records (New York) reveal that one of the pronunciations of <ir> during the 17th century was [ɛɪ]: *Squerels Rock* for "Squirrels' Rock" (1710) which betrays a pronunciation of ['skwɛɪəl]. *Ferst* [fɛɪst] is given for "first" (1662), probably with [fæɪst] variants. Recall Gil and Hart's pronunciations of *skirt*, *shirt* and *birth* with [ɛɪ]. We shall see that this is very pertinent to Franklin's Boston pronunciation.

In the dialects in which it occurred, once ME /ir/ was lowered from [ɪɪ] to [ɛɪ], it merged with ME /er/ (cf. below for details). Both reflexes then followed a similar process by which [ɛɪ] which was further lowered to [æɪ].

Orbeck (1927, 32) offers a long list of examples for Massachusetts: *ferst* [fɛɪst] "first" (Groton, 1682), *gerl* [gɛɪl] (Plymouth, 1642), *gearl* [gɛɪl] (Dedham, 1701), *cercomstances* ['sɛɪkəm,stænsɛz] (Plymouth, 1660), *scerts* [ʃɛɪt] "shirts" (Plymouth, 1655) *therd* [θɛɪd] (Dedham, 1663), *vertew* ['vɛɪtɛu] (Dedham, 1671, Plymouth, 1686). For this last example, there is a possibility that Franklin pronounced his "Art of Virtue" as [æɪt əv 'vɛɪtu ~ vɛɪtru]. Other examples are *feirmly* [fɛɪmli] for "firmly" (Plymouth, 1683), *aferming* [ə'fɛɪmɪŋ] for "affirming" (Dedham, 1661), *confermed* [kɒn'fɛɪmd] (Watertown, 1662) and *confearmed* [kɒn'fɛɪmd] (Watertown, 1666). Note, however, that the Groton records (1682) also give *confarmed* [kɒn'fæɪmd]. The Dedham (1661) and Groton (1677) record *afermitive* [ə'fɛɪmətɪv] while the Dedham records also give *afarmitive* [ə'fæɪmətɪv] (Dedham, 1661). These last two examples show the competition between [ɛɪ] and [æɪ] pronunciations in Massachusetts as early as the 17th century. To this should be added numerous examples of centralization of these very same words.

Webster (1789, 105) argued [ɛɪ] was the "correct" and most elegant in polite speech and he condemns two other competing pronunciations.

Another very common error, among the yeomanry of America, and particularly in New England, is the pronouncing of *e* before *r*, like *a*; as *marcy* for *mercy*. This mistake must have originated principally in the name of the letter *r*, which, in most of our school books, is called *ar*. This single mistake has spread a false pronunciation of several hundred words, among millions of people.

13 Nevertheless, it is possible that the quality of this vowel may have been closer to [ɐ] or even [ɛ] for some speakers than [ɛ] based on phonetic proximity to [ɪ]: *bridge*, *kin*, *build*... This would be more in line with Mazarin's DRESS vowel which, following Bellot (1586), he also describes as [ɛ] (Mazarin, 2020, 4).

To avoid this disagreeable singularity some fine speakers have run into another extreme, by pronouncing *e* before *r*, like *u*, *murcy*. This is an error. The true sound of the short *e*, as in *let*, is the correct and elegant pronunciation of this letter in all words of this class.

Note that Webster's realization of the letter <r> was probably [æɹ], not too distant from Sheridan's [ɛɹ] pronunciation for <r> (Sheridan, 1786, 67) (on this point, see Duponceau below).

The New York colony shows similar patters with the Southold records (NY), giving several forms for "girl." Recording the sale of a Native American "girl," the same clerk spells it two different ways only a few lines apart, first as *gairle* and after as *garle* (1698). The pronunciation would appear closer to [gæɹl].

And I doe bind myself my heirs, execut' and administrate to make good ye sale of ye abovesaid Indian *gairle* to him said Parker his heirs & assignes; and I doe acknowledge to have received of him ye said Parker for and in consideration of said Indian *garle* as full satisfaction, the full & just sum of sixteen pounds current money of this province. (Case, 184, 180)

The [gæɹl] pronunciation has survived in North Yorkshire to this day and in Scotland. The first stage allowed the shift from [gɹɹl] > [gɛɹl] > [gæɹl] and no doubt gave the present vernacular American pronunciation of "gal" [gæ:l]. We must assume that these were roughly contemporaneous and coexisted with other earlier North American pronunciations. The Hempstead records (NY) give *thard* [θæɹd] for "third" (1664). See Duponceau's transcription of *bird* as [bæɹd] (Duponceau, 1818).

This evidence reveals the following pattern of development [ɹ] > [ɛɹ] > [æɹ]. The final stage was reached perhaps via slight lowered [aɹ]: [æɹ > aɹ] > (vɹɹ) > [ʌɹ ~ əɹ]. We shall see a passage from [vɹ] > [ʌɹ ~ əɹ] for *Nurse* and *Worse* words. See also *forst* for "first" below.

Similarly, Dobson (1968, 562, note 1) records *miracle* as *maracle* ['mæɹəkɹ] and, with apocope, *mercle* ['mæɹkɹ] (my transcription) both from the 14th century (cf. 562-563). Hall (1942, 16) transcribes two forms of this word as ['mæɹɹkɹ], which he claims was said by older speakers near Gatlinburg, Tennessee, alongside the more common ['mæɹɹkɹ]. I would add the following transcription ['mæ:ɹkɹ ~ 'mæ:ɹkɹ] showing once again the continuity between earlier English pronunciations and vernacular American varieties. (See below for examples of centralization.)

In an important article written in 1818, the Franco-American linguist, Pierre-Etienne Duponceau (1760-1844) provides a subtle analysis of this phenomenon giving the mid and low front vowels specific names. For instance, [æ:] and [æ] are named "Arpeth." When short, it is pronounced [æ] as in *man* and *carry*, but also in *herd* [hæɹd] and *merchant* ['mæɹtʃənt] as well as in *learn* [læɹn] (cf.

ME [ɛ] + /r/ below). Again, this demonstrates the clear continuity between the examples cited above from the New York and New England Records. He goes on to claim that *bird*, *fir*, *sir*, *third* and *firmament* were still pronounced with a very short [æɪ], for instance, [bæɪd], [fæɪ], [sæɪ], [θæɪd] and [fæɪməmənt], confirming the vocalic quality of the <ar> spellings in the town records. This stands as another example that, contrary to Dillard's contention, there was indeed direct transmission between the 17th-century colonial koines and 19th-century American English varieties.

Elsewhere in this article Duponceau writes:

I consider the sound of i in these and all other similar words to be that of Arpeth, pronounced short. To prove it, I take, for instance, the word *bird*, in which I find the sound of the <i> to be the same with that of <a> in *bard*, except that the first is short and the last is long. To bring this to a sure test, let the word *bard* be articulated, let its vowel sound a be prolonged, and then suddenly shortened, it will end with the sound of i in *bird*, thus ba-a-a-ird. (Duponceau, 1818, 252)

He summarizes the various pronunciations of “arpeth” [æɪ] “when short” in the following contexts:

Arpeth: [æ] And when short

1. By a, in art, (verb) *man*, *carry*, *mortar*; *partition*.
2. By e, in *herd*, *merchant*, *terrible*.
3. By ea, in *learn*.
4. By i, in *fir*, *sir*, *third*, *bird*.* (Ibid., 252)

We shall see that Franklin accidentally transcribes “learned” ***larn’d*** rather than his usual centralized ***lyrn’d***, showing a reversion back to his own New England pronunciation. Given that this Arpeth pronunciation is also given for examples 2 and 3 and relate to ME /ɛɪ/, we shall return to Duponceau’s observations again below. The initial passage from /ir/ > /ɛr/ makes the final shift from [ɛɪ] > [æɪ] described by Duponceau perfectly predictable.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, his opinion regarding centralized pronunciations of <ir> words is interesting: “The vulgar pronunciation of these words and others similarly spelt, is *fur*; *sur*; *thurd*, *burd*, but I do not think it correct.” This reveals that educated Americans at this time still held to the older [æɪ] or [ɛɪ] pronunciations while, in London, the [əɪ ~ ʌɪ] pronunciation had recently become the model for many a generation earlier (Franklin, 1768/1779). Nevertheless, Walker (1791) still advocated the use of [ɛɪ] words such as *mercy*.

Franklin’s decision to centralize the vowels in these words might reveal that Franklin adopted Stevenson’s preference for these innovative centralized pronunciations, in which case her accent may have been more indicative of a lower-middle-class London accent (cf. Chapter 27).

Thirty-one years previously, Webster still condemned this centralized [əɪ]

pronunciation in his *Dissertations* (1789, 105) writing that many American speakers pronounce “mercy” as if it were “marcy” [mæɹsi] and that “some fine speakers have run into another extreme,” pronouncing “mercy” as *murcy* [mæɹsi]. In a footnote on the same page he adds, “To remedy this evil, in some degree, this letter is named <er> in the Institute.” Like Duponceau (1818), he called for the preservation of the more conservative [ɛɹ] realization. As we shall see, nearly all the examples cited by Franklin follow the London-style centralization of <ir>, <er>, <or> and <ur> words which he generally transcribes as [ʌɹ ~ ʌɹ] (cf. Chapter 27).

Duponceau’s precise description of ME /ir/ as [æɹ] for Pennsylvania seems to confirm that the 17th- and 18th-century New England <ar> spellings were also pronounced [æɹ] well into the 19th century. For more examples from the New England poets see ME /ɛ:/ and /ɛr/ below. It is highly likely that there also existed alternative pronunciations that were backed and lowered to [ɒɹ]. Such lowered [ɒɹ] pronunciation combined with a strong retroflex realization of the /r/ as [ɹ] in these contexts may have accelerated the shift to [ʌɹ, əɹ]. Occasional spellings such as *forst* [fɒɹst] (1682) for “first” may support the existence of such backed and lowered pronunciations (cf. Groton records below).

2.4 ME /ir/ > /ʌr ~ ər/

Despite Duponceau’s comments about the “vulgar” pronunciations of <ir> words, it was already common and well-established in his day. The examples of ME [ɪɹ] ([ɛɹ ~ æɹ] > [ʌɹ ~ əɹ]) are numerous in the New England and New York town records. The Huntington records (NY), for instance, give *sturling* [ˈstɜɹlɪŋ] for “sterling” (1664), *bud* [bɜɹd], [bɜɹd] or even [bʌ(ː)d] (cf. below), with r-loss, for “bird” (1676). Note that *bird* results from a metathesis of OE *brid* which is still heard in contemporary Northwest Midlands English, i.e. [bɪɹd] (German, personal notes, Deane, Lancs.). *Durt* [dɜɹt] is given for “dirt” (1681), *thurd* [θɜɹd] for “third” (1664). The Hempstead records (NY) (Krapp, 1925, 172) also have *thurd* [θɜɹd] for “third” (1660), *thurdy* [ˈθɜɹti] for “thirty” (1665), *surtify* [ˈsɜɹtiːfai] for “certify” (1670) and *purmit* [ˈpɜɹmɪt] for “permit” (1657). In the Groton records, “first” is written *furst* 1664 (but also *forst* [fɒɹst] (1682)), *thurdy* [ˈθɜɹti] for “thirty” (1682), *pursin* [ˈpɜɹsɪn] for “person” (1686), *confurmed* [kɒnˈfɜɹmd] for “confirmed” (1685). Likewise, in the Watertown records (Mass.) I found the same spelling of “first,” i.e. “the furft of Eapril” (1677) (Crafts, 1894, 164) along with *burds* [bʌɹdz ~ bɜɹdz] for “birds” (1669), *shurts* [ˈʃɜɹts] for “shirts” (1671), *furst* [fɜɹst] for “first”, *thurd* [θɜɹd] for “third” (1671). Note that the Biglow Papers (1848) give *chutch*, suggesting the pronunciation of “church” was [tʃɜɹtʃ ~ tʃɜɹtʃ] (cf. post-vocalic r-loss in Chapter 21).

As we shall see in the following sections (cf. ME /er/, *Mercy* words, and ME /

ur/, *Nurse* words), Görlach (2012, 600) stresses the powerful influence of /r/ in the centralization process:

Once again, a following /r/ played an important role as a factor interfering with regular developments. For instance, the short vowels /ɪ/, /ʊ/, and /e ~ ε/ became indistinct before an /r/ in final position or followed by another consonant, e.g. in *bird*, *firm*, *sir*, *murder*, *hurt*, and *curb*. The three vowels collapsed under a mid-central /ʌ/ or /ə/, which after the loss of rhoticity evolved into /ɜ:/, and thus added a new phoneme to the set of long vowels. This change first affected /ɪ/ and /ʊ/ and only later reached /e ~ ε/; it started in the North and East in the 16th century, reached London by the 17th century and was complete only by the turn of the 19th century.

However, the loss of postvocalic /r/ was already commonplace in 17th-century New England in the less polished registers (cf. Chapter 23). If so, one can assume that r-loss was probably more widespread in the London area than has previously been imagined (cf. Chapter 23). The difference between GA and RP pronunciation is that this innovative (formerly vulgar) realization eventually became one of the salient features of prestigious RP English.

Franklin retained /r/ in all positions (perhaps reinforced under the influence of Philadelphia English). Furthermore, in many contexts and words, he preserved pronunciations (at least in his poetry) that were more commonly associated with earlier C1-type varieties of English, pronunciations which are at odds with the proto-phonological system he presents in his *Reformed Mode of Spelling* (1768/79).

17. Mid Front Vowels: ME /e:/, ME /ɛ:/

Introduction

Chapter 17 presents the various treatments of ME /e:/ (*Fleece* words) during 17th- and 18th-century England and colonial America. The discussion begins with a historical overview of the development of ME /e:/ starting with its raising to /i:/. However, evidence is examined demonstrating that pronunciation of ME /e:/ was maintained in conservative varieties of New England English until the 18th century, occasionally lowered to [e:]. This is attested in Modern English dialects by Wright (1905). Examples are cited of the shortening of ME /e:/ > [i ~ ɪ].

In the second part of this chapter the historical development of ME /ɛ/ is examined. Because of the complexity and numerous attested examples of variant forms and their treatments, the discussion will be pursued in Chapter 18.

1. Mid Front Vowels: Some Principles and Obstacles

Manfred Görlach provides a helpful synthesis of the development of English mid long vowels during the Early Modern period which serves as a convenient starting point for what follows.

While unconditioned changes generally left vowel quantities intact, conditioned (or combinative) changes could involve quantities, qualities, or both. In many cases where the modern spelling with a double vowel grapheme indicates a long vowel but the vowel is pronounced short, it was shortened after 1400, which is about the time when English spelling conventions were fixed. In the EModE era, shortenings concerned, above all, the vowels /e:/ and /u:/ and occurred in monosyllabic words ending in /d/, /t/, /θ/, /f/, /k/, or /v/. Examples of the reduction of /e:/ to /e ~ ɛ/ include *bread*, *dead*, *lead* (n.), *sweat*, *death*, *breath*, and *deaf*; examples illustrating the reduction of /u:/ to /u ~ ʊ/ are *good*, *stood*, *hood*, *foot*, *book*, *took*, and *look*. The reduction process was not a monolithic one, but reached individual lexemes at different points in time. (Görlach, 2012, 599, cf. Görlach, 1978, 1991, Barber 1976, 1997)

Despite the usefulness of Görlach's summary, the constant point of reference and the final endpoint of the historical evolution of English phonology is entirely

viewed from the perspective of RP English. In this he is not alone. It is important to keep in mind that many of the changes he describes here have not occurred in certain English or American varieties. In the last chapter, for instance, we saw that southern US English inherited certain traits of EME which have since been lost in England, such as the partial preservation of the tenseness of ME front short vowels /i, e, ε, u/ in certain environments. We saw examples such as [fi:ʃ], [di:ʃ], [wi:ʃ], which are shared by Northwest Midlands English varieties (e.g. Cheshire, Lancashire) as well as a large swath of American South stretching from southeastern Ohio (technically not the South!), the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia down to the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

With regard to the shortened long <ea> vowels *dead*, *lead*, (n.), *sweat*, *death*, etc. they are all realized as [e:ə] (with breaking) in the southern US varieties, including AAVE. I do not believe this lengthening is a recent secondary development. I have argued that breaking may be a consequence of the former lengthening of vowels that were already long. The ME short tense vowels were also partially lengthened, as well allowing New England poets such as Dwight to make puns such as a “heedless head” [hɛ:dlɪs ‘hɛ:d]. Although breaking may be a North American innovation, as we shall see, I have found at least one clear example of breaking in the 17th-century Hempstead records (NY), suggesting the feature is indeed English. Having said this, it may have been a relatively peripheral trait at that time which was best preserved in the southern colonies. We shall see that multiple examples of this kind existed in 17th- and 18th-century New England but have since been lost (cf. below and Chapter 18).

Finally, northern English dialects have also preserved the long quality of a number of the words Görlach records as having /u/, such as *book*, *took*, *look*, all pronounced with long [u: ~ uu:]. Certain varieties of Hiberno-Irish have preserved this feature. The treatment of <ea> words will be broached at the end of this chapter and will be continued in Chapter 18. The investigation of <oo> words (< ME /o:/) will be dealt with in Chapter 20.

1.1 The Qualitative Values of /ɛ/ vs /e/

Before getting to the heart of the matter, a few observations are necessary regarding the question of varying interpretations of IPA /ɛ/ and /e/ symbols by British, American and international phoneticians since the 19th century and the way these interpretations have clouded our understanding of the precise values of these front-mid vowels, but also their back equivalents and their allophones. This can and has caused possible misinterpretations of the data, a problem that is particularly acute with back low-mid and low vowels.

Added to this is the fact that the phonemic boundaries are unstable and vary according to dialect with allophonic variants, or what I have called “bridge”

or “transition” vowels. These vowels are potentially shared by two different phonemes. As we shall see with Shorrocks’ data below, this can lead to phonemic instability, even within the same dialect (i.e. registers of the same variety). For this reason, the history of English historical phonology cannot be considered solely on the basis of the phonological history of RP and GA, but of all varieties. This obviously complicates matters given that historical patterns of evolution are considerably messier, often presenting what appears, at least on the surface, to be contradictory data.

J. C. Wells (*Longman’s Pronouncing Dictionary*, 2005) and Peter Roach (*English Pronouncing Dictionary*, 2012) have chosen to replace the short front low-mid front vowel phoneme /ɛ/ by /e/ while American linguists and foreign linguists (e.g., Lilly and Viel, 1999) tend to use /ɛ/ to transcribe phonetic [ɛ]. Wells explains his decision as follows:

Since the DRESS vowel can be unambiguously written e, an English transcription with the symbol e is simpler than one with ɛ. (cf. Wells, 2009)

The choice is practical and logical within a purely English-language framework, but it also defeats the purpose of the IPA. This choice causes potential confusion between this new value attributed to English phonemic /e/, (i.e. [ɛ]), and, say, the French phonemic value of high-mid /e/ which corresponds phonetically to [e] (orthographic French <é>). On the other hand, the French phoneme /ɛ/ is realized phonetically, and very logically, as [ɛ] (French orthographic <è>) in keeping with its IPA value.

Furthermore, to complicate matters, historical linguists interpret ME /e/ and ME /ɛ/ with their original high-mid and low-mid values, just as is the case in French, Breton and other languages. Henceforth, to avoid this confusion and following an earlier tradition of phonetic notation, I systematically transcribe ME /e:/ with its high-mid value as /e:/ and Roach and Wells’ /e/ as /ɛ(:)/. I have done the same for back high-mid /o:/ which I transcribe as /o:/ for the same reason (see Chapter 20 for similar, but more complex, problems concerning back mid vowels). The back vowels are discussed in more detail in Chapters 20 through 23.

1.2 Tracing Phonemic Boundaries: An Exact Science?

Interestingly, a similar phonemic breakdown can still be observed in certain Modern English varieties today. Shorrocks (1998, 176), for instance, records Bolton English (Lancashire) as possessing two mid front vowel phonemes: mid front /e:/ and low-mid /ɛ:/ (i.e., /kɛ:lt/ “beaten” or “overtaken” vs /kɛ:lt/ “cowardly”) showing that the common assumption that all English dialects share the same basic phonemic system as RP and GA is completely erroneous.

In addition, he provides precious insight into the phonological flexibility that exists in this dialect, which certainly characterizes dialect systems more globally as they once existed during earlier times in uncontrolled situations.¹ For example, in this passage he speaks of the difficulty of fixing the phonemic boundary between /ɛ:/ and /æ:/ in Bolton English.

From the point of view of the system as a whole, it seems advisable to assign words such as *house, town, shout, how* (and most others that can be pronounced /ɛ:/) primarily to /ɛ:/ nowadays but, clearly, there remains some degree of overlap between /ɛ:/ and /æ:/. In terms of phonetic space, there is a continuous run of variants between the two phonemes ... (Shorrocks, 1998, 182)

This “*continuous run of variants* between the two phonemes” is an essential observation in our discussion, since this principle can be extended to frontiers separating other English phonemes and this is one of the underlying principles of this book. Again, the phonemic frontiers of one variety do not and never have always matched those of other varieties. Furthermore, the role of the allophonic variants as phonetic bridges between phonemes is critical for a better understanding of the way the Great Vowel Shift occurred or, in many cases, the way it only partially occurred.

1.3 Sociolinguistic Considerations

Once again, as I explained in Chapter 15, Volume I, the phonological history of English cannot be viewed as a uniform, linear process with a common starting point and end point. This vision was probably inherited from the 19th-century Indo-Europeanist tradition that established the foundations for modern comparative and historical linguistics. It is likely that this tradition led us to focus almost exclusively on the historical development of standard variants of the European languages (in our case, RP and GA) and the idea of linguistically unified antecedents.

Given that we have all been formatted to view language through a prescriptive prism, many of us still consider non-standard varieties as “incorrect” or as having “degenerated” from an older, “purer” forms of perfectly unified ancestor language. This vision of language change is shared by many speakers of other European languages, not only English speakers. For this reason, many modern (often theoretical) linguists have, perhaps unconsciously, excluded these stigmatized, basilectal varieties (whatever the language) from their field of study, despite the fact that they have always been part and parcel of the language as a whole. In our case, their role in the evolution of English is central to our story (cf. Part II). I have heard colleagues literally scoff at the idea of studying such

1 That is, in situations where there was no formal schooling.

“debased” idioms. In my view, although certainly unintentional, this masks a blatant disregard and perhaps an unconscious disdain for the people who speak them.

For instance, time after time, it is frequently the pronunciations that have been formerly regarded as “vulgar” that have gradually filtered into “polite” speech and are now judged to be “posh” and “elegant.”

As we shall see in Chapters 28 and 29, following the American Revolution, differing views in America regarding linguistic propriety divided Americans for well over a century, with many Americans opting in favour of the London standard while others supported Noah Webster’s call for a national American model based on New England English. We shall see that Franklin’s influence in this process was as considerable as it is unknown (cf. Chapter 30).

To conclude this discussion, in the following chapters on the genesis of American English, the goal of which is to identify Franklin’s native Boston pronunciation (perhaps with Philadelphia influences), I systematically distinguish between high-mid [e(:)], mid [ɛ(:)] and low-mid [ɛ(:)] and stress their potential role as transitional vowels. I shall argue that these variant realizations must have all been part of the colonial feature pool. To better take these factors into account and, given the obvious uncertainty surrounding the precise quality and quantity of these vowels and diphthongs, I have also instituted what I have called a “phonetic range” attributing several possible variant pronunciations for a given phoneme(s) (cf. Chapters 11 and 12 for a broader discussion). At other times, however, when repeating the phonetic range becomes too cumbersome (e.g. [ɛ: ~ ɛ̃: ~ ɛ:]), for practical purposes, I simply limit the number of variables to be considered to a single one based on the context of the discussion.

2. ME /e:/ > /i:/ (the Precursor of *Fleece* Words, RP/GA /i:/)

Historians of English generally agree that the shift from ME /e:/ to /i:/ had largely been achieved by about 1500. Swrdwal offers numerous examples demonstrating that this stage had been reached in 1480 at Oxford University where he composed his “Hymn to the Virgin” in which he transcribed “queen” in Middle Welsh script as *kwin* [kwi:n], etc. (cf. German, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2007).

I suggested that ME /e:/ probably had two allophones [ɛ: ~ ɛ̃:] while ME /ɛ:/ also had two allophones [ɛ: ~ ɛ̃:] with [ɛ̃:] serving as a bridge between the two phonemes in a similar way to Shorrocks’ description of the overlap of [æ:] and [ɛ:] in Bolton English.² Admittedly, this is in itself a simplification of the

² When I discovered Mazarin’s article, I realized that he had also come to this same conclusion. He writes “Since mid [ɛ] can phonologically be classed as either /e/ or /ɛ/, it can be paired with a long vowel of either height. As mentioned elsewhere, Ellis and Smith also suggest that long /e:/ may often have been realized as [ɛ̃:]. Readers may further wish to keep in mind the

reality that must have existed on the ground, but the point here is to indicate the basic principle involved in these processes of change. The intermediate vowel [ɛ:] is what wore down the phonemic distinction between the two phonemes, rendering the passage from one to the other more fluid. Therefore [ɛ:], [ɛ:], [ɛ:], [ɛ] and [æ:] served as links in a chain permitting not only the raising but, very importantly, the lowering of these long front vowels. Their short counterparts were also subject not only to raising (cf. *pin-pen* merger below) but also lowering, a subject that has too often been neglected and which directly affected Franklin's own early 18th-century Boston variety. Examples of these shifts crept into his transcriptions recorded in his *Reformed Mode of Spelling* (Franklin, 1779) and will be studied in detail in Parts III and IV.

2.1 ME /ɛ:/ Realized as /ɛ: ~ ɛ:/ or /i:/

Despite the neatness of the traditional scheme showing [ɛ:] > [i:], it did not occur as uniformly as previously imagined, with some speakers continuing to pronounce it as before. As we shall see, the older /ɛ:/ appears to have lingered on in a number of words in New England until at least the late 18th century and there are signs from Franklin's rhymes that he also conserved this pronunciation alongside innovative /i:/.

Mazarin's analysis of the Oxfordshire poet, John Wilmot, Lord Rochester (b. 1647), shows interesting examples of this poet's variable pronunciations involving the evolution of ME /ɛ:/ and ME /ɛ:/, showing both conservative and innovative treatments of these vowels. Very naturally, this once again raises serious questions about the exact nature of the rhymes: are they perfect or approximate?

He rhymes *deceive-believe*, *feet-beat*, *obscene-queen*, *grin-clean*, *esteem-him*; plus *debt-seat*, *possess-peace*, *possessed-releas'd*, *test-least*, and the two verbs *lead-tread*. Nonetheless, he is far more likely than Philips to rhyme MEAT on itself, as in *weak-break*, *extream-dream*, *speaks-break* [sic], *reach-teach*. This makes me fairly sure that Wilmot retains distinct MEAT /e:/ in at least some environments while Philips lacks it altogether; in other words, that he is a morbid C1 speaker while she is a hard C2. By the late 1600s, even robust C1 speakers were likely to have a few oddities among their MEAT words. In 1687, for example, Cooper has exceptional non-prerhotic FACE /ɛ:/ in *scream* and /i:/ in *beach*, *steam*. Bailey in 1726 has /i:/ in *beam*, *stead*... (Mazarin, 2020, 18)

If I understand him correctly, Mazarin interprets *debt-seat*, *possess-peace*,

possibility that mid [ɛ:] and [ɔ:] allophones helped bridge the gaps as /ɛ:/ raised to /e:/, and /ɔ:/ raised to /o:/, at different stages." This is precisely my point and why I often resort to [] to record variant pronunciations for the very reasons that the phonemic boundaries are not immutable.

possessed–releas’d, *test–least*, and the two verbs *lead–tread*, along with *weak–break*, *extream–dream*, *speaks–break* [sic], *reach–teach* as having been pronounced [ɛ:] by Wilmot. For the reasons expressed above, I would allow for the possibility of the mid [ɛ:] variant here (or even [ɛ:], as Mazarin, 2020, suggests himself in other circumstances). However, he interprets *deceive–believe*, *feet–beat*, *obscene–queen* as all being pronounced with [i:]. Although he very well may be right in this case, I have uncovered numerous examples in Franklin, Barlow and Dwight’s poetry, too many to have any serious doubts, showing these same categories of words being pronounced with [ɛ ~ ɛ: ~ ɛ:] with [ɛ:] being the most likely candidate ([ɛ:] shifting too easily to [i:], cf. Chapter 16).

With regard to <ei>, <ie>, <ene>, <ere>, and even <ee> spellings, Orbeck (1927) gives numerous examples pronounced [ei ~ æi] or [ɛ: ~ ɛ: ~ ɛ:], a few examples of which are *resaitte* [rɛ’sɛ:t ~ rɛ’sɛit ~ rɛ’sæit] for “receipt” (Watertown, 1674), *desayt* [dɛ’sɛ:t ~ dɛ’sɛit ~ dɛ’sæit] (Dedham, 1676), but *recaue* [ɹɛ’sɛ:v ~ ɹɛ’sɛ:v] for “receive” (Dedham, 1675), *pease* [pɛ:s] for “piece” (Groton, 1693), *strete* [stɹɛ:t ~ stɹɛ:t] for “street” (Plymouth, 1699), *strem* [stɹɛ:m ~ stɹɛ:m] for “stream” (Plymouth, 1703)...

Webster (1789, 115) writes:

the words *either neither; deceit, conceit, receipt*, are generally pronounced by the eastern people *ither; nither; desate, consate, resate*. These are errors; all the standard authors agree to give ei in these words the sound of ee. This is the practice in England, in the middle and southern States.

If my interpretation is correct “Easterners,” i.e. New Englanders along the coastal areas, pronounced “either” and “neither” [əiðəɹ] and [nəiðəɹ], while *deceit, conceit, receipt* were pronounced [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] by many New Englanders. This, of course, is a conservatism. As we shall see, Franklin plainly shared these older pronunciations which Webster condemns here as one can see with his rhyme of *deceit* [dɛ’sɛ:t ~ dɛ’sɛ:t] ~ *great* [gɹɛ:t ~ gɹɛ:t] (1746). Mazarin confirms this assessment, noting the retention of *Meat* words with [ɛ:] in New England beside /i:/: “In town records from rural Massachusetts in the late 1600s, Orbeck (1927) finds frequent confusion between *Meat* /ɛ:/ and “rate” spelt *reatte* (i.e. [ɹɛ:t])” (Mazarin, 2020, 9). Note, however, that Miège insisted on a pronunciation close to French [ɛ:] <é> in such words, which provides further evidence that the realization of *Meat* and *Face* words at the time was considerably muddled with, once again, a phonetic range resembling [ɛ: ~ ɛ: ~ ɛ:]. This was probably the variable state of affairs in early 18th- century Boston for *Meat* words and there can be no doubt that innovative /i:/ was also heard. We shall see that older educated 18th-century New Englanders considered this new /i:/ to be substandard. This is another case of colonial lag, because this had been the case in London during the previous century. Signs of this variation in registers also

appear in the poetry of the New Englanders.

For reasons which will be outlined below, the former were still pronounced in outlying areas of 18th-century England and America and, this was still the case until recently in the dialects of England. Indeed, and as mentioned above, 150 years after Wilmot, the New England poets were still composing rhymes where words like *steam*, *beam*, *steady*, *dream*, along with a host of other examples, were all pronounced [ɛ: ~ ε:] reflecting a stage close to Wilmot's conservative C1 pronunciation.

Raised in London, the pro-royalist poetess, Katherine Philips (1631-1664) had a far more innovative pronunciation than Wilmot, rhyming *leaps-skips*, *seem-him*, *enrich-speech*, *grieve-live* all presumably with [i:]. Once again we return to her tense /i:/ for ME /i/. As Mazarin (2020, 18) expresses it, her "mid-seventeenth century KIT /ɪ/ was so tense and peripheral that she felt comfortable rhyming it with *Fleece* /i:/ (my italics)." He continues his analysis stating that "soft C2 poets rhyme their *Meat* tokens without obvious patterns."

Although the tendency appears to favor [ɛ: ~ ε:] rhymes for words spelt <ea> but also, quite strikingly, on occasion, even those spelt <ee>, <ie> and <eCe>, we must also ask ourselves whether these were simply conservative poetic conventions respecting rhyme schemes of their illustrious 17th-century predecessors. Connected to this is the question of disparitary registers that were bound to the language of poetry.

As pointed out previously, Philips' pronunciation of "live," rhyming with "grieve," may have been fully lengthened to [li:v] (or with breaking [li:əv?]). If so, this could have led some *Kit* vowels to merge with those of *Price* words. This could also explain Franklin's innovative pronunciation of the verb to "live" as [ləiv] which was discussed in the section dedicated to ME /i:/> [əi] in Chapter 16.

Mazarin (2020, 8) shows that the 17th-century poets' pronunciation oscillated between conservative [ɛ: ~ ε:]. He quotes the poet John Dryden who, like Franklin's father and uncle, was a Northamptonshire man. In 1631, a generation before Franklin's uncle and father were born, Dryden was rhyming *sea* [si:] with *free*, *be*, *degree* also pronounced [i:]. Having said this, we also saw in the preceding chapter that these *Fleece* words may have also been realized at times as [əi ~ ɛi] diphthongs in 18th-century Massachusetts. We saw that "sea" was recorded as [sɛ:] in large areas of England by Wright (1905). As unlikely as this may seem initially, we shall see below that there is a possibility that Dryden was still pronouncing these <ee> words with [ɛ: ~ ε:]. It certainly was the case in New England.

Burton (2010, 75) acknowledges the dilemma regarding the variable rhymes in William Barnes' Dorset poems.

Some words that occur at least once with ēa are rhymed with words having /i:/ as well as those that have /e:/ (i.e. my [ɛ:]). In the face of these apparent inconsistencies, what are we to suppose... That Barnes "didn't know what he was talking about?"

Burton (2010) insists Barnes had a keen ear and delighted in crafting intricate rhyme schemes which highlighted the specificities of Dorset dialect. The claim that he was an incompetent poet was “Unlikely in a man who wrote four careful accounts of the phonology and grammar of his dialect – 1844, 1847/48, 1863, 1886.” He considers, as I do here, that the “occasional near rhyme is inevitable” but certainly not the rule. I shall make the same argument concerning the so-called eye rhymes involving <ove>: *love* ~ *rove*, *love* ~ *move*, etc. We shall see that, in most cases, they were perfect or near perfect. But what was the common denominator? This will become clear as we explore the data more closely.

Again, these very same kinds of problematic rhymes are the ones which appear in the poetry composed by Franklin and other New Englanders, but also that of 17th-century English poets. The potential conservatism is perplexing given the late date at which these are used in New England. Another point we often forget is that poetry was often intended to be read aloud. So how were these variant conservative or innovative pronunciations accepted by the hearers?

At a time when variation in language was the rule rather than the exception, the acceptability of alternative pronunciations in poetry can only have depended on the positive reception of these variant uses by the audience themselves and, perhaps even more likely, their obviousness to such differences in pronunciation. If so, this would have given poets considerable freedom to shift from one pronunciation to another without necessarily shocking the listeners.

2.2 Examples of Conservatism: *Fleece* Words Pronounced [ɛ: ~ ɛ:]?

From the evidence at hand, it is difficult to determine the precise pronunciations of *Fleece* tokens spelt <ee>, <ei>, <ie> and <eCe>. In 18th-century New England, there seems to have been considerable oscillation between the older [ɛ: ~ ɛ: ~ ɛ:] pronunciations and more innovative [i:]. We have seen a number of these examples cited by Orbeck (1927), for instance, *cleene* [kli:n] for “clean” (Groton, 1663) (but compare this with Hall’s [klɛn], 1942, and Shorrocks [tlen], 1998) but [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] for *ded* [dɛ(:)d] “deed” (Groton, 1683) and *strete* [stɹɛ:t ~ stɹɛ:t] for “street” (Plymouth, 1699).

I have already noted that Miège contended that words such as *scene*, *serene*, *extreme*, *complete*, *sphere* as well as *receive*, *perceive*, *seize* were all pronounced during the 1680s with high-mid [ɛ:] (Mazarin, 2020, 10).³ It is thus not inconceivable that conservative speakers were still pronouncing these same words with a more open [ɛ:]. Recall that Franklin’s father, uncles and older

3 Except in open syllables, the weight of the evidence explored suggests that, in many cases, they were still largely pronounced [ɛ:] or [ɛ:]. As we have seen for the Breton evidence, most speakers might not even have paid attention to the distinction in pronunciation between [ɛ:] and [i:].

siblings were born in Northamptonshire during the time Miège described this feature.

Even though late 18th-century Type-D speakers were unanimously pronouncing *Meet* and *Meat* [mi:t], the American poets were still occasionally, but unambiguously, clinging to the older pronunciations. Philip Freneau (Rhode Island/New Jersey) coupled *brain* [bɹi:ɛ:n] ~ *unseen* [ʌn'sɛ:n], *meet* [mɛ:t] ~ *great* [gɹi:ɛ:t ~ gɹi:ɛ:t] (unless they were both pronounced with [i:] as attested by Samuel Johnson, cited in Bowen, 1905), *lay* [lɛ: ~ lɛ:] ~ *tree* [tri: ~ tri:] while Samuel Woodworth has similar rhymes in his *Heroes of the Lake* (1814), giving *meet* [mɛ:t ~ mɛ:t] ~ *fate* [fɛ:t ~ fɛ:t?], *again* [ə'gɛ:n] ~ *scene* [sɛ:n] (examples cited by Krapp, 1925, 128).

In view of the fact that these poets were aiming for perfect or near-perfect rhymes, there can be little doubt that these last examples provide tangible evidence that certain *Fleece* words could still be pronounced [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] in New England. Orbeck's evidence implies that it was probably not restricted to poetic contexts. Diphthongization cannot be ruled out in some of these examples either.

Taking this a step further, what does Freneau's *lay* ~ *tree* rhyme tell us about Franklin matching *extempore* ~ *tree*?

With pellets and with stones, from tree to tree,
A fruitless toil, and liv'st *extempore*? (1748)

On the assumption that he pronounced *extempore* with final Latin <e> [ɛ ~ ɛ] and not [i], [ɛkstɛm'pɔ:ɛ(:)] (NB: he had taught himself Latin eleven years before this), *tree* was presumably pronounced [tri: ~ tri:] here, rendering it, at the very least, a near rhyme. Once again, we are faced with the very real possibility that Franklin and the other poets stretched their pronunciations to include older but commonly-used dialectal variants to fit their rhymes. Franklin also rhymes *tea* ~ *agree* at a time when *tea* was generally pronounced [tɛ: ~ tɛ:]. It would thus appear that *agree* was pronounced [ə'gɹi:ɛ: ~ ə'gɹi:ɛ:] (1748) or perhaps with the diphthongal pronunciation suggested in Chapter 16.

In his *Columbiad*, Barlow also rhymes *great* with *feet*. Again, unless he pronounced *great* [gɹi:ɛ:t], like Lord Yonge, chief speaker of the House of Commons in the mid-18th century, *feet* must be realized here as [fɛ:t ~ fɛ:t]. He also rhymes *bleed* ~ *spread*, *bleed* ~ *deed* (cf. *ded* for “deed” above in the Groton records), *seas* [sɛ:z] ~ *breeze* [bɹi:z ~ bɹi:z], *feel* [fi:l ~ fi:l] ~ *swell* [swɛ(-)l ~ swɛ(-)l“?] and so on.

In the following couplet, Barlow's rhyme of *lead* [lɛd ~ lɛ:d?] ~ *head* [hɛd ~ hɛ:d?] poses no problem, but *heedless* may also have been realized here as [hɛ:dləs ~ hɛ:dləs] in which case, a lengthened vowel in *head* would not only improve the effects of the assonance, but also the pun: [ðɛ 'hɛ:dless 'hɛ(:)d] (i.e. a headless head!).

Turn as he turns, dismiss the whizzing *lead*,
 And lodge the *death*-ball in his *heedless head*.
 Tho' some neglectful seldom care to read,
 And faithful Wives no more than Bibles heed. (1729-1730)

Considering the patterns with *Meat* words pronounced [ɛ:], Franklin probably pronounced *read* and *heed* with this vowel. These interpretations appear relatively straightforward, but others are less obvious, with Dwight rhyming *green* ~ *men* and *queen* ~ *men*, which raises questions about their respective vowel qualities and quantities. As I have mentioned previously, Burton (2010, 26) records *men* as being pronounced [mɛn] in Dorset during the 1840s, which he claims Ellis misinterpreted as [mn], a good example of the *pin-pen* merger normally associated with southern US English. This pronunciation is indeed very close to [ɪ] and it could well be this high-mid [ɛ] transition or bridge vowel that permitted the *pen-pin* merger in the first place. More on the *pin-pen* merger below. Mazarin (2020, 4) interprets *Dress* words as having been realized as [ɛ] and not [ɛ]. Quoting Bellot's *Familiar Dialogues*, he writes "For *Dress* /e/ he uses high-mid French é, and for *Meat* /e:/ the same sign doubled to éé. This shows that *Meat* words were well on their way to [i:] in the London area.

Krapp's contention that *sin* [sin] and *seen* [si:n] were near rhymes (differing only quantitatively) is repeated for the same minimal pair by Franklin in his RMS (1779, 470a) and Hall's examples of ME *i* pronounced as [i:ɪ] (emanating from an elongated, tense [i:], an allophone of /ɪ/), it is possible that Wilmot's rhymes of *grin* ~ *clean*, *esteem* ~ *him* were pronounced *grin* [gɹi:n] and *him* [hi:m] thus reducing the gap with *clean* [kli:n] and *esteem* [ɛs'ti:m]. However, in the late 18th-century New England poems, *esteem*, to take only one example, is still paired on occasion with words pronounced [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] or even [ɛ:] (see below).

2.3 The Case of *Been* and *Green*

A similar example is the pronunciation of *been* which, like *green* and *queen* above, was variably pronounced with [ɪ], [i], [i:] or perhaps a short [ɛ ~ ɛ ~ ɛ] depending on the dialect. For instance, the Southold records (NY) give *ben* [bɛn] (1681) for "been," but this same document also has *bine*, possibly for [bi:n?] or even [bɛin?] (1681) (cited in Krapp, 1925, p. 117). Burton (2010, 71) also observes that Barnes had two forms of "been" which he spelt *bin* or *ben* and which he interprets to have been "/bm/, /bin/ or /bi:n/" (Burton, 2010, 70). Elsewhere, however, Burton takes Barnes' *bin* ("a container for rubbish"), also spelt *ben*, to be [bɛn]. Nevertheless, on analogy with his transcription of *men* [mɛn], *ben* may also have been pronounced [bɛn] and, for the aforementioned reasons, misinterpreted by some linguists (including Alexander Ellis) as [ɪ]. The fluctuation between /ɪ/ and /ɛ/ was commonplace in places like Essex and Sussex which contributed so many

settlers to the Massachusetts settlement (cf. ME /i/, Chapter 16). This is confirmed by Orbeck (1927, 34) who gives the following examples: *beene* [bi:n] for “been” (Dedham, 1667), *ben* [bɛn] (Dedham, 1636, Watertown, 1670, Plymouth, 1688) *bin* [bm ~ bin] (Watertown, 1651, Groton, 1665, Dedham, 1641, Plymouth, 1657) and *binn* [bm] (Dedham, 1660). With regard to this [ɛ] pronunciation of “been,” he adds “The short form [bɛn] is presumably a lowering of a type [bin] and is *thus almost the only survival in our present speech of the lowering of short i to [ɛ]* (my italics).” Orbeck appears to confirm that, during his lifetime, [bɛn] was still a variant of [bm], although he does not say where (presumably Massachusetts). The lower to [ɛ] has been associated with Suffolk and Essex dialects.

Lowell (1848) also transcribed “been” as *ben* but its precise value is, once again, difficult to determine: [bɛn ~ bɛn ~ bɛ(:)n]?

To hev⁴ a solid vally (value);
This heth my faithful shepherd *ben*
In pasturs [pæstəz] sweet heth led me,
An’ this’ll keep the people *green*.

According to Dobson (1968, 451), however, “the orthoepists are almost unanimous in recording the weak form [bm].” Likewise, Franklin (1779) transcribes “been” as ***bin*** [bin ~ bm]) as do Webster and Walker (1791). Dobson adds that the word “been” “is scarcely ever heard otherwise than the noun “bin.” Of course, this is still the case in GA today while RP now favours the strong form [bi:n] which is thought to have spread in England during the 19th century.

Dobson (1968: 404) also shows that *green* was shortened to [gɹɪn], which he describes as “a dialectal or vulgar shortening.” Wright (1905, 468) cites examples such as [gɹɛin] for Westmoreland, Yorkshire and Cheshire, [gɹɛən] for Suffolk, [gɹɛ:n] for Worcestershire and Buckinghamshire, while Sussex has both [gɹɪn] and [gɹi:n]. Obviously, such variety, which is certainly not recent given the geolinguistic distribution of these pronunciations, complicates any attempt to trace the history of these two *Fleece* words with any degree of certainty.

With this in mind, how can one interpret Franklin’s rhymes of *been* ~ *in* (1734), *been* ~ *green* (1748) and *been* ~ *then* (1734)? To schematize the different possibilities I have classified them as follows:

- a. *Been* [bm ~ bi:n] - *in* [ɪn ~ i:n]?
- b. *Been* [bm ~ bi:n] - *green* [gɹɪn ~ gɹi:n]?

If so, this is yet another case where more than one pronunciation of a given word appears to have been possible or acceptable to Franklin and his readers, just as [bm] or [bi:n] are to modern standard speakers. In this case, poetic license may

4 See ME a > [æ] at the end of this chapter.

have allowed Franklin and the other New England poets to adapt their rhymes as they saw fit. I have no clear response to any of these questions, but I would suggest that code-shifting in contexts where accommodation was preferable may have been far more common and flexible than we can imagine today.

2.4 <eer> ~ <ere> ~ <ear> ~ <are> ~ <air>

If words such as *sphere* and *sincere* were pronounced [ɛ:] as described by Miège during the 1680s, were they still pronounced in the same way in New England during the 18th century? Evidence from the New England poems demonstrates that they were. Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanack* offers numerous clues regarding Franklin's idiolect and that these data tie in nicely with the evidence provided by Dwight, Barlow and others in this regard. Franklin rhymes "fair," pronounced [fɛ:ɪ], and "sincere," with the following hypothetical phonetic range: [sm'sɛ:ɪ ~ sm'sɛ̃:ɪ ~ sm'ɛ:ɪ]. (See [æ:ɪ] for "fair," "care," "stare," etc. in Chapters 18 & 19).

With private Views, thy Friend may promise *fair*,
And Servants very seldom prove *sincere*. (1749)

In the same poem, the preceding couplet is followed by this which contains a rhyme of *are* ~ *fair* [ɛ:ɪ ~ ɛ̃:ɪ] and, again, in some cases [æ:ɪ].

Your distant Prospects all precarious *are*,
And Fortune is as fickle as she's *fair*.

The logical choice is that *are* is pronounced as either [ɛ:ɪ] or [ɛ̃:ɪ] and *fair*, pronounced as [fɛ:ɪ] or [fɛ̃:ɪ]. **Er** and **eer** [ɛ:ɪ ~ ɛ̃:ɪ] are precisely the transcriptions that Franklin gives in his RMS for "are."

In his 1748 issue of *Poor Richard's Almanack*, Franklin rhymes *sphere* ~ *prepare* ~ *there* demonstrating that he too pronounced *sphere* [sfɛ:ɪ ~ sfɛ̃:ɪ].

How swift it climbs th' etherial Space!
And now it traverses each *Sphere*,
And seems some knowing Mind, familiar to the Place.
Dame, hand my Glass, the longest, strait *prepare*; --
'Tis He—'tis TAYLOR's Soul, that travels *there*. (1748)

More of Franklin's examples with *sincere*, *severe* pronounced [ɛ̃: ~ ɛ:]:

sincere ~ *air* (1750)

severe ~ *prayer* (1749)

severe ~ *prepare* (1749)

sincere ~ *revere* (1752)

sincere ~ severe (1755)

A hundred years after Miège, Dwight (b. 1752) was still rhyming *sincere ~ where*, *sincere ~ dear* (cf. Franklin's *dear* [ɛːɹ] rhymes below), *sincere ~ severe*, *sincere ~ cheer*. Franklin regularly spelt "cheer" as *chear*, which I feel certain he also pronounced [ɛːɹ]. Orbeck (1927, 53) gives 17th-century evidence showing the frequent use of <ea> spellings for *Face* words, revealing that the scribes had fused the pronunciation of the two spellings.

Nevertheless, coming full circle, Franklin also offers a rhyme of *serene ~ seen* (1756) while Barlow rhymes *serene ~ green*, *scene ~ green*. Is this one of the innovative, Type C2/D pronunciations of *seen* and *green* with [iː] or, as we saw above with the shortened variant [ɪ], even a realization approaching [ɛː ~ ɛːɹ]? It is impossible to tell in many cases.

Barlow rhymes *career ~ year*, *ear ~ steer* at a time when *ear* and *year* were still commonly realized as [ɛːɹ] and [jɛːɹ] respectively (see next chapter). Similarly, Franklin also rhymes *sphere* [sfɛːɹ] ~ *career* [kəˈɹɛːɹ] (1738), demonstrating that he must have pronounced the latter [kəˈɹɛːɹ], again, if only in poetic contexts. Likewise, Franklin rhymes *bear* [bɛːɹ] ~ *deer* [dɛːɹ ~ dɛːɹ] (1743) along with other <ea> and <ee> words. In these particular examples, they were also probably realized as [ɛː ~ ɛːɹ]: *succeeds ~ leads*, *seen ~ serene*, *steer ~ year*, *year ~ career* and *been ~ green*.

In Chapter 18, multiple examples demonstrate that Franklin still pronounced words like *year*, *ear*, *fear*, *tear* (n.), etc. with [ɛːɹ]. His rhyme of *year ~ steer* is another example supporting the idea that *steer* could also be realized as [ɛːɹ]. Given that *year*, *fear*, *leads*, and *serene* have all been shown in multiple rhymes to have been pronounced [ɛː ~ ɛː ~ ɛːɹ] (alongside [iː] variants), one can assume that their counterparts, *steer*, *succeeds*, *career*, *seen*, *been*, etc. had [ɛː ~ ɛːɹ] variants alongside the increasingly dominant [ɪ] ~ [iː] forms which were slowly creeping into the system. *Fear* was still pronounced [fɛːɹ] by Barnes in 1844!

And yet, in his *Reformed Mode of Spelling*, Franklin presents the vowels of *sin ~ seen* and *did and deed* (1779, 470b) as differing only in vowel quantity, not quality, that is, /i/ ~ /iː/. I have already cited Krapp (1925, 113) as being among the first to signal that *Kit* words were probably still pronounced with a tense /i/ rather than /ɪ/. This also shows that Franklin must have considered the innovative [iː] pronunciation of *Fleece* words to be the more prestigious and more typical of London English. This would explain why no conservative examples of ME /ɛː/ as [ɛː ~ ɛːɹ] are found in the RMS. This is yet another sign that his RMS was not based on his own English.

The bottom line is that, nearly three hundred years after the shift from ME /ɛː/ > /iː/ purportedly took place, American poets were still occasionally pronouncing ME /ɛː/ as [ɛː ~ ɛːɹ] and perhaps even [ɛ] when shortened.

2.4 The Variable Realizations of <ie> and <e> Spellings

Dobson (1968, 568) cites J. Smith (1681) who spells “yield” as *yeld* (< OE *gieldan*, Anglian *geldan*). Dobson interprets *yeld* as having short [ɛ] or short [ɪ], the latter presumably another early *pin-pen* merger.

Once again, Orbeck (1927, 36) provides us with crucial evidence for 17th-century Massachusetts, giving examples such as *feld* and *feeld* for “field,” which I interpret as [fɛld] and [fi:ld] respectively. He gives *feild* (Watertown, 1647) and *feyld* (Watertown, 1677) which are very probably what they seem, that is, diphthongized [feild] realizations. *Felld* also seems to represent a shortened [fɛld] (Watertown 1677). The phonetic range here appears to be [ɛ: ~ ɛ ~ ɛi ~ i:] in Massachusetts alone.

One hundred years later, we have seen that Franklin, Barlow and Dwight pronounce <ie> and <ei> words [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] or, perhaps even [ɛ:]. Dwight rhymes *yield* ~ *expell'd* and also *field* (OE *feld*) ~ *swell'd* (twice), *field* ~ *held* and *field* ~ *yell'd*. Likewise, Barlow rhymes *field* ~ *beheld* but also *beheld* ~ *wield* in Dorset. This suggests that *yield* and *field* are probably pronounced [ɛ:] or and rhyme with *swell'd*, *held*, *beheld*. An associated question is whether these last three words were realized with a slightly tense [ɛ:] or even with breaking, as in modern southern US English “swelled” [swɛ̃-əld], “held” [hɛ̃-əld]... (particularly possible before a velar [ɫ]).

Franklin's rhyme of *yield* ~ *fill'd* (1757) suggests, on the surface at least, that he pronounced these as [jiəld] and [fiəld] or some variant of these. Or does this represent another case of Suffolk lowering [jɛld] ~ [fɛld]? Elsewhere in *Poor Richard's Almanack*, he pairs *yield* with *field* on four occasions.

Another example is Franklin's pronunciation of “priest” for which he gives two interesting rhymes.

One Month a Lawyer, thou the next wilt be
A grave Physician, and the third a Priest:
Chuse quickly one Profession of the three,
Marry'd to her thou yet may'st court the rest. (1738)

The second is:

Eyes and Priests
Bear no Jest. (1735)

If *rest* is realized as [ɹɛst ~ rɛ-st] and *jest* rendered [dʒɛst ~ dʒɛ-st], is *priest* pronounced [pɹɛst ~ prɛ-st ~ pɹɛ(:)st]? On the other hand, one wonders whether *rest* and *jest* are subject to the *pin-pen* merger here. We will see that Franklin transcribes “friend” and “get” as *frind* and *git*. If so, the result would be [pɹi-st] ~ [ɹist ~ ɹɪst] and [pɹi-st] ~ [dʒist ~ dʒɪst]. I find it interesting that the LALME gives this [i ~ ɪ] realization in only two localities of eastern England, one in Norfolk,

the other in Suffolk (Map 358 ‘i’ in Priest: *prist*, *pryst*) and in two other places in the West Midlands. It is difficult to put this down to simple coincidence, although it may well be.

Note however that Franklin rhymes *just* ~ *best* ~ *drest* (i.e. dressed). This means that “just” (like “such”) is pronounced with [ɛ], [dʒɛst] or that, due to the *pin-pen* merger, ME /ɛ/ > /ɪ/, we might have [dʌɪst] or [dʌɪstʔ], rhyming with [bɪst] and [dʒɪst]. In Chapter 11, we saw the examples of “such” as [sɪtʃ ~ sitʃʔ] and [setʃ] as being typical of Massachusetts and many other areas of the colonies. (See also “much” [mɪtʃ], cf. Chapter 11, Chapter 20.)

As I have already stressed, in nearly all cases, these poets were striving to achieve perfect or near-perfect rhymes. In Franklin’s case, I would therefore lean in favour of a pronunciation approaching [i ~ iː] for *yield*, *field*, *wield*, *priest* while others may still have pronounced them with [ɛː ~ ɛː]. Once again, it is impossible to confirm these hypotheses with any degree of confidence. Given the numerous variant pronunciations that existed at the time and the quantitative and qualitative variation which we have previously observed, we are obliged to envisage these possibilities with considerable flexibility.

As we have seen, Franklin’s rhymes globally show a preference for the older, C1-type pronunciations such as *sincere* [sɪnˈsɛːɹ] ~ *there* [ðɛːɹ] ~ *air* [ɛːɹ] (1749), with a probable [æːɹ] variant in these words. He also rhymes *deceit* [dɛːsɛːt ~ dɛːsɛitʔ] ~ *great* [grɛːt ~ grɛitʔ] (1746), etc. Ladd (b. 1764 in Rhode Island) matches *raged* [ɹɛːdʒd] ~ *besieged* [bɛːsɛːdʒd] (cited in Krapp, 1925, 128).

Born in 1706, Franklin was over forty years older than Barlow, Dwight and the other New England poets and yet they also use these same rhymes with [ɛː]. Krapp (1925, 128) writes “The rimes of the New England poets of the eighteenth century indicate rather a free use of pronunciations with [ɛː] in words which later took [iː] in general speech.”

For “piece,” Orbeck gives *pice* [pɛisʔ], *pes* [pɛ(:)s ~ pɛ(:)sʔ], *pees* [piːs], *pease* [pɛːs] and, for “receive(d)” *recauied* [ɹɛːsɛːvd] (Dedham, 1656), *recaiuied* [ɹɛːsæivd ~ ɹɛːseivd] (Dedham, 1663), *reseaiued* [ɹɛːsɛivd ~ ɹɛːseivd] (Dedham, 1678) and *resaiued* [ɹɛːseivd ~ ɹɛːsæivd] (Groton, 1683), *recaue* [ɹɛːsɛːv] (Dedham, 1675), *resaiueth* [ɹɛːseivəθ ~ ɹɛːsæivəθ] “receiveth” (Watertown, 1678), *resaiuers* [ɹɛːseivəɹz ~ ɹɛːsæivəɹz] (Dedham, 1693). *Recived* [ɹɛːsæivd] shows what appears to be a popular, innovative [əi] pronunciation.

For variant forms of “receipt(s)” he gives *resaights* [ɹɛːsæit ~ ɹɛːsei(ç)t] (Watertown, 1673), *resaits* [ɹɛːsæits ~ ɹɛːseits] (Watertown, 1677, *resaite* [ɹɛːsæit ~ ɹɛːseit] (Dedham, 1679), *resight* [ɹɛːsiːt ~ ɹɛːsi(ç)tʔ] (Watertown, 1679), *resai(gh)t* [ɹɛːsæit ~ ɹɛːsei(ç)t] (Groton, 1683, Watertown, 1679), *resait(e)* [ɹɛːsæit ~ ɹɛːseit] (Dedham, 1693, Watertown, 1674).

For “deceit,” he gives *desayt* [dɛːsæit ~ dɛːseit] (Dedham, 1676), *kay* [kæi ~ kei] for “key” (Dedham, 1694), *eyther* [ˈeɪðəɹ] for “either” (Dedham, 1637, Groton,

1665), *ayther* ['æiðəɪ ~ 'eiðəɪ] “either” (Groton, 1682, Watertown, 1673), *eayther* [eiðəɪ] “either” (Dedham, 1681), *naythur* ['næiðəɪ ~ 'neiðəɪ] (Watertown, 1672), *naither* ['næiðəɪ ~ 'neiðəɪ] (Dedham, 1699). For “conceive” he has *concaiue* [kɒn'sæiv ~ kɒn'seiv] (Dedham, 1661) (cf. Chapter 23’s diphthongs, ME /ai/). This diphthongal pronunciation is condemned by Webster (1789) who implies that it is a New Englandism. He advocates [i:] for “either” and “neither” as in the “Middle and Southern states.”

The conclusion here is that the 17th-century Massachusetts phonetic range for all of these words appears to have been in the vicinity of [e: ~ ɛ: ~ ei ~ æi].

With regard to the latter, [ei] was probably the dominant pronunciation by this time for *Price* and *Wait* words were wavering between older [æi] and [ei] and more innovative [e: ~ ɛ:] variants. Although [æi] is considered to have been recessive in these examples, it should be noted that this pronunciation is still current in Norfolk and Dorset and other regions of England today. This is yet another example of the usefulness of a variationist approach when viewing diachronic data. It also warns us to beware of dating language changes in an overly rigid way.

Orbeck gives a number of <e> spellings pronounced which area all realized as [ɛ(:) ~ ɛ(:) ~ ɛ(:)] corresponding to contemporary [i:] in RP or GA. For the following transcriptions I have given only the “bridge vowel” [e:]. For “decent” he gives *dasant* ['dɛ:sənt] (Groton, 1682) and for “legal” *lagall* ['lɛ:gəl] (Groton, 1683), *lagiall* ['lɛ:gjəl] (note the palatization of [g]) here, or is it a glide [gi]? (Groton, 1683), *lagualy* ['lɛ:gwəli] (Groton, 1685), *lagully* ['lɛ:gəli] (Groton, 1683), etc., “senior” as *saner* ['sɛ:nəɪ] (without the j-glide) (Groton, 1692), *caeder* ['sɛ:dəɪ] for “cedar” (Dedham, 1661), *aequall* ['ɛ:kwəl] (Dedham, 1662) and “specie” *spashie* ['spɛ:ʃi] (Groton, 1685), *spashy* ['spɛ:ʃi] “specie” (Groton, 1682). An [æ] variant cannot be ruled out in some cases, however.

3. Low-Mid Front Vowels

3.1 ME /ɛ:/ > [e:] > [ɛ:] > [i:]

The variation in the accounts given by orthoepists since the 16th century demonstrates how difficult it is to classify or even assign a date for these sound changes. In this discussion, we examine the history of *Meat* words as they appear in Franklin’s native dialect.

As might be expected, Hart (1569) was still pronouncing words like *deal* as [dɛ:l ~ dɛ:l] and Bullokar (1580) presents *weary* as ['wɛ:ɪi] or ['wɛ:ɪi], suggesting that the two pronunciations were possible in Suffolk. Dobson (1968, 606-607) concludes that [ɛ:] had already moved to [e:] “in careful speech” by 1650. But, once again, one can wonder what “careful speech” really means in such a

chaotic linguistic environment when variation was the rule. Dobson also cites examples of high-mid [ɛ:] pronunciations given by orthoepists for *meat*, such as Wharton (1654) who gives *sweat* [swɛ:t] and Price (1670) who has [nɛ:d] for “knead.” Similarly, Fox and Hookes (1673) transcribe *steal*, *wheal* (pustula), *seal*, *ceiling* and *peace*, all with high mid [ɛ:] (Dobson, 1968, 639-640). Recall that Josiah Franklin was born in 1657, his brother Benjamin in 1650 and Franklin’s mother in 1667 (with Norfolk origins), and it is probable they too preserved the older [ɛ: ~ ɛ: ~ ε:] pronunciation for *Meat* words and, as we have seen, in a fair number of *Fleece* words. Could we go so far as to say that they respected a phonemic distinction between /ɛ:/ for *Fleece* words and /ε:/ for *Meat* words? That would be going too far.

Mazarin (2020, 5, footnote 6), also, argues that *Meat* words began to rise to high-mid [ɛ:] as early as his type-B1 phase starting around 1550 and he cites Bellot’s 1586 transcription of a phrase uttered by a London schoolboy who had asked his teacher for permission to go out and play. The boy pronounced *play* [plɛ:]⁵ and *please* [plɛ:s] and *leave* [lɛ:f] respectively with devoicing of the final fricatives. Could this be significant? Franklin also transcribes many words in his *Reformed Mode of Spelling* with final <-s> where one would have expected <-z>. We shall return to this point in Chapter 25.

Teim tou go tou plê if it pléés you tou gif vs lééf.
 Time to go to play if it please you to give us leave.
 [ˈteim tɒ ɡɒ tɒ ˈplɛ: if it ˈplɛ:s ʝɒ⁶ tɒ ɡɪf us ˈlɛ:f] (my transcription)

Note the clear [ɛi] diphthong in the word “time” [teim] as well as Franklin’s rhyme of *leaves* and *waves*.

The Snows are gone, and genial Spring once more
 New clothes the Meads with Grass, the Trees with *Leaves*;
 And the proud Rivers that disdain’d a Shore
 Within their Banks now roll their lessen’d *Waves*. (1743)

In all probability, Franklin pronounced *Face* words [ɛ: ~ ε:]. Therefore; the likelihood is that his realization of *leaves* was [lɛ:vz ~ lɛ:vz], not [ɛ:]. Taking assonance with “trees” into account, he may have pronounced the latter [tɹɛ:z] here. As mentioned above, these [ɛ: ~ ɛ: ~ ε:] pronunciations were used much more broadly in the late 17th century and correspond well to Mazarin’s Type C1 category which he presents in this way:

5 This shows that the pronunciation of “play” as [plɛ:] was another innovation. Some late 17th-century orthoepists still advocated [plæi] as the preferred pronunciation.

6 At this time, <y> was probably still pronounced as a vocoid [i ~ ɪ] rather than a glide in careful pronunciation.

Like his source Cooper, Miede in the 1680s represents the first stage, a robust type C1, with distinct MEAT /e:/ in its traditional orthographic environments (*ea*, *eCe*, and sometimes *ei*). Miede equates MEAT with French *é* (close [e:]) in *meat*, *clean*, *speak*, *appease*, *conceal*; *scene*, *serene*, *extreme*, *complete*, *sphere*; and *receive*, *perceive*, *seize*. (Mazarin, 2020, 5)

Words such as *serene*, *sphere*, *scene* and also *extreme*, *complete*, *receive*, *seize*, *perceive*, etc. would have all been pronounced [e:]. What is striking is that it is likely that the New England poets were still pronouncing these with a mid [e: or ɛ:] rather than high-mid [e:] for the reasons I have explained previously. Speakers have difficulty distinguishing between [e:] and [i:]. The preservation of old [e: ~ ɛ:] permitted the longer survival of this pronunciation. In addition, it was certainly considered to be older and, very probably, more elegant than the innovative [i:] pronunciations which, in the minds of the more cultivated colonial elites, may have been associated with the London vernacular. This is supported by Lass' "Lineage II, popular London" classification (cf. Figure 17.1).

Some of the reasons for this conservatism have already been postulated (also cf. the conclusions to Chapters 10 and 11). Nevertheless, as I have already said, once speakers began confusing this [e:] with its high-mid counterpart, [e:], the shift to [i:] was almost inevitable and it is this realization that won the day in the London area from the late 16th century onwards. By the end of the 18th century, polite English orthoepists encouraged its use.

Sociolinguistically, the rules of language propriety appear to have been more conservative in America. Nevertheless, depending on the register and dialect, true mid and low-mid front [e:~ ɛ:] co-existed in free variation alongside [e:] and [i:].

Lass (1999, 92-93) proposes that there were three parallel treatments of this pronunciation of ME [ɛ:] > [i:] and both Mazarin and Dobson quote Gil's *Mopsae* informant who pronounced *leave* with [i:] (cf. below). Lass (1999, 92-93) explains the shift schematically as follows at different sociolinguistic levels:

Fig. 17.1 Lass' Lineages I, II, III: 1550-1650.

Lineage 1: Hart "Mopseys"	Lineage II: Popular London	Lineage III: General London Standard
ME 1550	ME 1550 1650	ME 1550 1650
Seas: ɛ: > ɛ:	Seas: ɛ: > e: > i:	Seas ɛ: > ɛ: > e:

* Lass' /e:/ has the value of high-mid [e:] which I would interpret more broadly as [e: ~ ɛ:].

Gil (1619) has *meat* with [i:] (again, associated with the *Mopsae* he criticizes). *Clean* [kli:n], *weasel* ['wi:zəl] and *meat* [mi:t], are recorded by Coles (1674) and Smith (1674), with the latter recording *heard* with [hi:ɪd]. Dobson asserts

that [herd] was the normal pronunciation (Dobson, 1968, 476), as it is in Scots today. About the pronunciation of “heard,” Webster (1789, 127-128) writes the following:

In the fashionable world, *heard* is pronounced *herd* or *hurd*. This was almost unknown in America till the commencement of the late war [i.e. of Independence], and how long it has been the practice in England I cannot determine... That *herd* was not formerly the pronunciation, is probable from this circumstance; the Americans were strangers to it when they came from England, and the body of the people are so to this day. To most people in this country the English pronunciation appears like affectation, and is adopted only in the capital towns.

Ironically, Webster is making a case against himself here since “heard” [hɛɹd ~ hɛɹd] was very clearly the older pronunciation and thus, in his mind, the “purer” form. Ellis (1869, 1069) comments on this observation by Webster writing that “It is implied that the Americans say *heerd*, like Dr. Johnson [supra p. 624, note, c. 2.]” *Heerd* [hi:ɹd ~ hi-əd], alongside *heern* is given for the Boston area of Massachusetts by Lowell (1848) and is still commonly realized as [hiɹd ~ hɹɹd] among older traditional Appalachian speakers. Orbeck (1927, 31) gives *heerd* [hi:ɹd] for “heard” (Watertown, 1677) confirming Webster’s intuition that this was one of the pronunciations among 17th-century New Englanders.

This last example is interesting in light of Görlach’s observation that, during the 15th and 16th centuries, the vowel in words originally spelt *deer* and *heer*, representing ME high-mid /e:/, were lowered to /ɛ:/ and, for this reason, came to be spelt *dear* and *hear* (Görlach, 2012, 599-600). However, Görlach (ibid.) goes on to say that most [ɛ:r] words retained their ME pronunciations: *bear*; *pear*; *swear*; *wear* while, in “a few lexeme-specific” cases, [ɛ:] merged with /e:/ in EME, giving RP /ɪə/ such as *shear*; *spear*; *fear*; *ear*. This makes perfect sense and suggests that this [e:] was a transition vowel to [i:]. As we shall see below, this change was not at all complete in 18th-century America and Franklin almost certainly pronounced most of these in the older way, that is “fear” [fɛ:ɹ ~ fɛ:ɹ], “ear” [ɛ:ɹ ~ ɛ:ɹ] ... Note also that, in some cases, the vowel of *hear* was not raised but rather lowered, an example being [jæ:ɹd] which was still current in Lancashire English until only a few decades ago (Shorrocks, 1998; cf. next section): [a 'jæ:ɹd ðɪ] “I heard thee!”. *Heard* can also be centralized [jə:d].

Dobson (1968, 639) shows that this fluctuation between [ɛ:] and [e:] occurred before consonants other than /r/ and he gives “*mean* (vb.) as an example which was pronounced [e:] in J. Smith (1674) but [ɛ:] by “other orthoepists.” For shortening of [ɛ:] and [e:], see below.

3.2 ME <ear>, <are> and <air> > /i:r/

To complicate matters even further, ME /a:r/ and ME /air/ (with monophthongized [ɛ:] in the last case) were raised in some varieties to [e:] > [ɛ:] > [i:] so that a number of words such as *afeared*, *care* and *chair* must have fallen together with ME /ɛ:ɪ/ and been raised to [i:ɪ], while the majority of speakers continued to realize them as [ɛ:ɪ] or with lowered [æ:ɪ].

Lowell (1848) has multiple examples of this kind for mid-19th-century Massachusetts, such as *skeery* ['ski:ri] “scary,” *skeercely* ['ski:rsli] “scarcely,” *sheer* [ʃi:r] “share,” *cheer* [tʃi:r] “chair,” *afeared* [ə'fi:rd] “afraid,” *heard* [hi(:)rd] “heard” (past part.) or *heern* [hi(:)rn] (irreg. past part) “heard,” and *dreen* [dri:n] for “drain,” *eend* [i:nd] for “end.” See the reference to Lord Yonge’s *great* pronounced as [gri:t] above (Speaker of the House of Commons).

Webster (1789, 128) also advocated [di:f] as the “correct” pronunciation of *deaf* and criticizing [dɛf] as “English.”

Deaf is generally pronounced deef. It is the universal practice in the eastern states, and it is general in the middle and southern; though some have adopted the English pronunciation def. The latter is evidently a corruption

Note that Shorrocks (1998, 284, 286) shows a raised, diphthongized development for Lancashire: “chair” [tʃiə(ɪ)], “death” [dɪəθ], “deaf” [dɪəf], “afraid” [fiəɪt] (<*a*)feered) ... “scared” [skiə(ɪ)t], “well” [wɪəl].

Nevertheless, despite these innovations, conservative speakers in various regions of England continued pronouncing these <ea> words as [ɛ: ~ ɛ:], and this is borne out by Wright’s 1905 *English Dialect Dictionary* which provides multiple examples. For instance, contrary to his comments regarding *heard* and *deaf*, Webster (1789, 128) prefers the pronunciation of [bɛ:ɪd ~ bɛ:ɪd] for “beard” and condemns [bi:ɪd] stating that:

Beard is sometimes, but erroneously, pronounced *beerd*. General practice, both in England and America, requires that e should be pronounced as in *were* (i.e. [wɛ:ɪ]), and I know of no rule opposed to the practice.

Following Orbeck (1927), Mazarin indicates that the two systems outlined by Lass for London in Figure 17.1 above (II Popular and III Standard) co-existed in Massachusetts. Mazarin writes that he is “startled by the complexity of the sub-groups” with WAIT pronounced [ɛi], MEAT as /ɛ:/ or /i:/ and FACE as /ɛ:/. He adds:

Reaching for a way to summarize the dialect shown in the Massachusetts records, I am startled by the complexity of sub-groups I have described within type C. These colonial villagers used a “soft” type C2 with diphthongal WAIT; in other words, they realized MEAT as either /ɛ:/ or /i:/, and they distinguished WAIT /ɛi/ from FACE /ɛ:/.

Benjamin Franklin, born a few dozen kilometers away in the busy seaport of Boston, *spoke like a Londoner* (my italics), in a “hard” C2 with monophthongal WAIT; that is, he realized MEAT as /i:/ alone, and merged WAIT with FACE as /ε:/. Since this type eventually displaced all the other dialects we have mentioned, we may say that the womb of present-day English was seventeenth-century London (Mazarin 2020: 10).

Remarkably, here Mazarin put his finger on two crucial points. First, he correctly notes the New England villagers in the Boston area retained the older “soft” type C2 variety, although I would push it back to C1 in many cases. He is clearly perplexed by the fact that Franklin “spoke like a Londoner” and that his English was so distant from that of the people with whom he had grown up. We shall see that these are not the only discrepancies.

Key words	17th-c. Massachusetts (Orbeck, 1927)	Franklin’s RMS
Meat	[ε:] or [i:]	[i:]
Wait	[æi ~ εi ~ ε:]	[ε:]
Face	[ε:]	[ε:]

As I have proposed from the outset, this can only be explained by the fact that Franklin’s natural pronunciation was, in fact, basically the same as his Massachusetts compatriots. This stands as further proof that his *Reformed Mode of Spelling* was inspired by what he considered to be prestigious London pronunciation as it existed in the 1760s. One of the important points of this book is to highlight Polly Stevenson’s important role, as his coach and collaborator, in refining and correcting Franklin’s his proto-phonemic spelling and pronunciation system (cf. Chapters 25 through 28). Her role in this has never been acknowledged.

The rhymes used by the New England poets (Franklin, Barlow, Dwight, Trumbull, Hitchcock and others) reinforce the sense of phonological unity with the New England town records. Taken together, we have a better vision of the New England koine.

3.3 More Evidence of Franklin’s Conservative Realization of ME /ε:/

An interesting point made by Lass (1999, 92-93) is that the [i:] realization of *Meat* words was associated with the *Mopsae* Lineage I and Popular London Lineage II. Viewed sociolinguistically, these were seen as “vulgar” throughout much of the 17th century and, in New England, well into the 18th century. We can now state with some confidence that the general London Lineage III which Lass describes

as the London standard, favoured the maintenance of the [e: ~ ɛ:] pronunciation of *Meat* words. This shows that [i:] realization was a stigmatized pronunciation in cultivated 17th-century London circles. This carried on into the first half of early 18th-century Massachusetts. Change, at least among the educated classes, appears to have come more slowly in the colonies. Franklin's personal speech appears to have been coloured by the older London standard, or what Mazarin classifies as the Type-C1 English which reached its zenith around 1680, according to him.

Furthermore, it may be that the [ɛ: ~ ɛ:ʔ] pronunciation of *Meat* tokens by the American poets suggests that a gap was growing between formal speakers of American English, who continued to adhere to the older London standard rather than adopting the formerly stigmatized /i:/ pronunciation that was gaining ground and prestige in England during the 18th century.

The following examples leave little doubt that the [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] realization of *Meat* words were still common, if not dominant, in New England (and colonial America more generally) throughout the 17th century and well into the 18th century. Orbeck (1927, 34-35) gives many examples which, in this series, are all spelt <a> and which I have interpreted elsewhere as having the following phonetic range: [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] and, certainly for others, [ɛ:]. In the following transcriptions I have only indicated the bridge vowel [ɛ:]

<i>impached</i>	[ɪm'pɛ:tʃt]	"impeached"	(Dedham, 1661)
<i>spake</i>	[spɛ:k]	"speak"	(Watertown, 1667)
<i>whate</i>	[(h)wɛ:t]	"wheat"	(Dedham, 1678)
<i>lauing</i>	[lɛ:viŋ]	"leaving"	(Groton, 1681)
<i>laue</i>	[lɛ:v]	"leave"	(Groton, 1685)
<i>rasin</i>	[ɹɛ:zən]	"reason"	(Groton, 1681)
<i>rasonable</i>	[ɹɛ:zənəbəl]	"reasonable"	(Groton, 1694)
<i>pase</i>	[pɛ:s]	"peace"	(Groton, 1682)
<i>sason</i>	[sɛ:zən]	"season"	(Groton, 1682)
<i>plasing</i>	[plɛ:ziŋ]	"pleasing"	(Groton, 1683)
<i>plase</i>	[plɛ:z]	"please"	(Groton, 1685)
<i>sat</i>	[sɛ:t]	"seat"	(Groton, 1683)
<i>sate</i>	[sɛ:t]	"seat"	(Groton, 1683)
<i>sats</i>	[sets ~ sɛ:ts]	"seats"	(Groton, 1683)
<i>sating</i>	[sɛ:tiŋ]	"seating"	(Groton, 1685)
<i>trate</i>	[tɹɛ:t]	"treat"	(Groton, 1683)
<i>sased</i>	[sɛ:zd]	"seized"	(Groton, 1684)

<i>daken</i>	[dɛ:kən]	“deacon”	(Groton, 1692)
<i>dacon</i>	[dɛ:kən]	“deacon”	(Groton, 1693)

An [æ] realization is not totally out of the question in the following words: *brach* [bɹɛ(:)tʃ ~ bɹæ(:)tʃ?] for “breach” (Plymouth, 1681), *dackins* [ˈdɛ:kənz ˈdækənz?] for “deacons” (Groton, 1683), *prach* [pɹɛ:tʃ ~ pɹæ:tʃ?] for “preach” (Groton, 1691). See accounts of [æ] realizations in Chapter 18, section 4.

3.3.1 The Franklins and the New England Poets

Benjamin Franklin the Elder (1650-1727) left Ecton, Northamptonshire, for Massachusetts in the company of his brother, Josiah (Franklin’s father), in the 1680s. A few poems composed by Benjamin the Elder have survived and, in the one below, composed July 7, 1710 and addressed to his nephew, he alludes to his illness as well as to his inability to find work in Boston and his gratitude to Josiah for having fed and lodged him for four years. As we saw in Chapter 3, Franklin had considerable admiration for his intellect as well as his staunch radical-Whig positions.

And there (i.e. in Boston) a Kind, kind Brother found
Bless’t with a Wife and Num’rous *Race*
 Four years they did me kindly *Treat*
 But noe *Employment* did present
 Which was to me a burden *great*
 And could not be to their content. (Franklin the Elder to Franklin Jr., 1710)

Here Benjamin Franklin the Elder still evidently pronounces “treat” [tɹɛ:t], which rhymes with [gɹɛ:t], pronunciations which were common in the mid-17th century and earlier. It should be recalled that this mid [ɛ:] pronunciation can still be heard in large areas of England. Note in passing that Lowell spells “great” *gret* and “greater” *gretter*, suggesting pronunciations with short [ɛ]. This pronunciation of treat is confirmed by the spelling of *trate* [tɹɛ:t ~ tɹæ:t] for “treat” (Groton, 1683).

Benjamin the Elder may have intended the first word of the second line *bless’t* [blɛst ~ blɛ-st] to show assonance with *race* [ɹɛ:s ~ ɹɛ:s]. Furthermore, his pronunciation of “employment,” which he spells *employment* [ɪmˈplɔɪmənt ~ ɪmˈplɔɪmənt], also shows the same kind of raising of [ɛ] > [ɪ] seen in the section on ME short /i/ (cf. Franklin Jr’s examples of *pin-pen* mergers: *git* and *find* (Chapter 18)).

In a poem entitled “On Ecton” (in 1702), Franklin the Elder expresses nostalgia for his native Northamptonshire village. We read the following couplet in which he rhymes *where* [hwɛ:ɹ ~ hwɛ:ɹ] with *appear* suggesting that his pronunciation

of the latter was [ə'pɛ:ɪ ~ ə'pɛ:ɪ].⁷

And these the Long broad pleasant Meadows *Where*
Noe bouling-Green more Even can *Appear*...

Furthermore, coming from Northamptonshire, his pronunciation and that Franklin's household, was very probably still rhotic and also may have retained the aspiration of /hw/ (/ʍ/) in *where* (which was lost very early in New England). This may explain why Franklin Jr. indicates [hw-] in all the transcriptions of his 1768 RMS letters. If the description of the /r/ phoneme he provides in his reform can be trusted, his pronunciation was also fully rhotic and, if my reading of his reform is correct, he may even have alternated between the stylish trilled [r] (in initial position) and the approximant [ɹ] in post-vocalic position (Franklin, 1779, 470a). More on this in Chapters 23 and 24.

In another extract from Franklin the elder's "On Ecton," he rhymes *dread*, *bread*, and *lead* (vb).

Here Lyes [ləɪz] the Dust I [əɪ] did so often *Dread* [dɹɛ:d]
There live'd [ləɪvd]? the Baker that did make the *bread* [bɹɛ:d]
But Where's the Boyes [bəɪz] that Higher ['həɪəɪ] did me *Lead* [lɛ:d]

The key to these three lines is the verb "lead," which was most likely still pronounced [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] in this context to rhyme with *bread* and *dread*. This is supported by another example from the Groton records: *leding* ['lɛ:diŋ] "for leading" (Groton, 1682). As we have already observed previously, in the 17th century, *bread* was often pronounced as a long vowel and, in this context, it is not impossible that the vowel of *dread* was long as well. This implies that, just as *treat* above, Franklin the Elder could also have pronounced *dread*, *bread* and *lead* with long [ɛ: ~ ɛ:], a realization that has survived today in the southern US states. Of course, the possibility of a near-rhyme here cannot be excluded. Citing the London (Dutch-born) grammarian, Lodwick (1686), Mazarin (2020, 11) also argues that *Meat* words were still pronounced [ɛ:] in London speech at the end of the 17th century. Again, in New England, they appear to have been lower and, since they were less easily confused with [i:], they survived far longer there.

In Chapter 14 (cf. Bowen, 1905, 545), we saw how Samuel Johnson informed us that Lord Chesterfield, the "best speaker of the House of Lords," pronounced *great* as [gɹɛ:t], like Ben Franklin the Elder, while Lord Yonge, the "best speaker of the House of Commons," pronounced it [gɹi:t], that is the innovative, popular London pronunciation of MEAT > /i:/.

We have seen that raised examples such as *afeared* > *afeered* [ə'fi:ɪd], *heard* [hi:ɪd]), *deaf* [di:f] were fairly numerous...We have seen that such variation

7 My sincere thanks to Dr. Tanguy Sollicec for having helped me find this online poem "On Ecton" which, despite my efforts, had previously eluded me!

in 18th-century English among the educated explains why Johnson believed Sheridan's ambition to produce an English pronouncing dictionary, and the "fixing" of a single, "correct" pronunciation for any given word, was a futile task. When the English basilectal dialects were factored into the equation, the challenge must have appeared even more daunting to his contemporaries and, in this sense, Johnson's opinion is perfectly understandable in the context of the time. As we shall see, Polly Stevenson, the neglected collaborator in Franklin's reformed alphabet project, seems to share Johnson's doubts about the ability given that she too had doubts about "fixing" English pronunciation (cf. Chapter 25).

3.3.2 Unstable Vowel Length and Quality of ME /ɛ:/, Orthoepists' Testimonies

During the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries the length and quality of the ME /ɛ/ and /ɛ:/ clearly vacillated greatly according to the speaker, social class and region in the manner referred to above. For instance, the originally short ME /ɛ/ [ɛ] of *devil*, for instance, is transcribed as [ˈdɛvɪl] by Brown (1700), a northerner, but Wharton (1654) records it with a long [ɛ:], [ˈdɛ:vəl] (Dobson, 1968, 476). I heard a preacher from Tangier Island (Chesapeake Bay) who pronounced "devil" as [ˈdʒɛ:vɪl]. Likewise, Dobson (1968, 472-473) states that, during this same period, the pronunciation of the digraph <ea> was either [ɛ:] or [ɛ], the length of this vowel varying considerably according to the speaker. For instance, he records *heavy* as being pronounced with long [ɛ:] by Gil (1619) and Cooper (1685). *Already* was pronounced with long [ɛ:] by Hart (1551/1569) where most orthoepists preferred [ɛ]. Other examples of words with long [ɛ:] include *seamstress* [ˈsɛ:mstəs] (Price, 1670), *mermaid* [ˈmɛ:ɪmɛ:d], *many* [ˈmɛ:ni] (Levins, 1570). Dobson (1968) writes that *health*, *wealth*, *breadth* and *meant* are "commonly recorded" with short [ɛ] but Gil has *health* with long [ɛ:]. Once again, all of these are long (with or without breaking) in the American South.

Another clear example of continuity between the 17th and the 19th centuries is Cooper's realization of *early* as [ˈɛ:ɹli] while Lowell (1848) spells "early" and "earth" as *airly* and *airth* respectively) [ɛ:ɹli] and [ɛɹθ]. Franklin gives numerous examples of this kind in his poetry (Chapter 18).

Other examples of variation involving words which now have short [ɛ] are *bread*, *spread*, *dead*, *head*... which as we saw above are described by orthoepists as having long [ɛ:] or, perhaps, [ɛ:]. Given the data obtained from the rhyme schemes of the late American poets and the dialectal variation found in non-standard varieties today, I would wager that conservative speakers still pronounced these words with front-mid [ɛ:] ~ [ɛ:]. Coles (1674) and Price (1668) give *bread* with [ɛ:], Wharton (1654) and Cocker (1696) have *dead* and *head* with

[ɛ:] (Dobson, 1968, 639-641).

Dobson (1968, 473-475) provides many 17th-century examples of French borrowings, originally spelt <e> [ɛ] (<ea>, <i.e.> in English) which vacillate between short [ɛ] and long [ɛ:] in words such as *term*, *pearl*, *perch*, *search*, *rehearse*, *pierce*, *fierce*, *leven*, *leash*, *leper* ~ *leaper*, *easy* and *treasure*, *press*, *lease*, *leash*... Other French borrowings such as *beast*, *feast*, *jest*, *pleasure*, *leisure*, *zealot*, *jealous*, *mess* and *phlegm* are all noted with long [ɛ:] while native English words *leafy* [ˈlefi], *steady*, *reachless* ([ˈɹɛtʃləs] meaning “reckless”)⁸ and *breakfast* all have short [ɛ] (ibid.). Note the persistence of [ɛ:] in these words and other orthoepists’ descriptions of [ɛ:].

Likewise, the following French words *treaty*, *pheasant*, *peasant* *endeavour*, *cease*, *realm* and *pretty*, are indicated as having short [ɛ] (ibid., 474). We shall see that this instability persisted well into the 18th century, as will be revealed by the rhymes of the New England poets. By the very nature of the data, even Dobson’s detailed accounts cannot take into account the degree of variation that existed in the basilectal varieties or sociolects. We can only assume that the phonological situation was even more multi-layered.

There are also a few instances in his reform where Franklin writes morphemic //ed// as orthographic <ed> rather than his usual <’d>. In a few issues of his *Poor Richard’s Almanack*, he gives interesting conservative rhymes in which he fully articulates the normally unstressed past participle morpheme //ed//, pronouncing the [ɛd] of *distinguished* [dɪsˈtɪŋɡwɪʃɛd] which he has rhymed in the next line with “learnèd head” and which I interpret to be [ˈlɛɪnɛd ˈhɛd] here. In his “Reformed Mode of Spelling,” however, following the pronunciation then in vogue in London, he spells *learn* with his symbol for centralized [ə]: **lyrn** [ləɪn] but also **ynlarn’d** [ənˈlæɪnd]. The latter probably reflects his natural speech. Presumably such rhymes would not have shocked his readers. There is almost certainly a touch of humour here in the formal pronunciation of “distinguished.”

By nought is Man from Beast distinguished
More than by Knowledge in his learned Head. (1736)

He gives another example in a cleverly crafted poem attributed to his pseudonym, Richard Saunders, where he has *said*, presumably [sɛd], rhyme with *married* which is trisyllabic here [ˈmæɪ.ɹɪɛd].

That ☽ Luna’s horn’d, it cannot *well be said*,
Since I ne’er heard that she was *married*. (1725)

⁸ I recall older speakers in northwestern Virginia still pronouncing “reached” [ɹɛtʃt] during the 1970s.

Note Wilkin's transcription of the "Apostle's Creed" (1668), which includes "conceived" [kɒn'se:vəd], "crucified" ['kri:ʊsɪfɪəd], "buried" ['bɜ:ɪəd] but also, as in Modern English, "descended" [dɛ'sɛndəd] and "ascended" [æ'sɛndəd] (cf. Chapter 13), a mere sixty-eight years before.

In such limited cases, these <ed> spellings are certainly conscious attempts on Franklin's part to represent an older, more formal style of pronunciation that may very well have still been employed in the Presbyterian sermons he attended during his childhood and that he continued to attend until the 1720s, when he finally became "disgusted" with his minister's lack of stress on virtue, morality and "doing good" (BF, p. 81). Nevertheless, in his letters to Polly Stevenson published in his *Reformed Mode of Spelling* (1779), we also encounter occasional <ed> spellings in his transcriptions which, in these particular cases, are due to his careless reversion to traditional spelling (Chapter 25-28).

18. Low-Mid Front Vowels: ME /ɛ:/, ME /ɛ/

Introduction

If the shift from ME /ɛ:/ > /i:/ was relatively straightforward on account of the short articulatory distance separating these two vowels, the movement from ME /ɛ/ > /i:/ was complex and has concealed the critical role of transitional vowels such as [ɛ:] and [ɛ:], which allowed the GVS to occur in the first place (cf. Chapters 15, 17 for theoretical contextualization). I would stress once again that, during the periods under consideration (16th to the end of the 18th century), the phonemic boundaries oscillated on account of not only the constant vocalic raising and lowering, but also shortening and lengthening. With regard to front vowels more generally, this involved [ɛ(:) ~ ɐ(:) ~ ɛ(:) ~ æ(:)]. Mazarin (2020, 8, footnote 10) seems to share this opinion writing, for instance, that “mid [ɛ] can phonologically be classed as either /ɛ/ or /ɛ/, it can be paired with a long vowel of either height.” This also recalls Shorrocks remark about the difficulty of tracing phonemic borders when multiple pronunciations of the same class of words are in competition. In this specific case, [ɛ:] is a transition or bridge vowel.

By the time the London *mopsae*¹ had raised their *Meat* vowels from [mɛ:t] to [mɛ:t] by around 1550, the passage to [mi:t] was almost inevitable.² Following Bellot (1586), Mazarin (2020) points out that this shift to [i:] had already occurred in lower-class London speech before the end of the 16th century. In the more evolved varieties, “meet” and “meat” words were now homonyms, as they still are in RP/GA today. So much for the “purity” of these models. Although there

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- 1 *Mopsae*, a term used by Alexander Gil (cf. Chapter 13) particularly in reference to young pretentious women who had a tendency to raise their vowels – man > men/min, hand > hend – a tendency that had its roots in local London-area varieties. Gil who argued in favour of conservative pronunciations, made the mopsae an object of ridicule.
 - 2 A cross-linguistic example: some varieties of Breton have three mid front phonemes, /ɛ:/, /ɛ:/ and /ɛ:/: <ker> /kɛ:r/ “expensive,” <ker> [kɛ:r] “farm or town,” <kaer> /kɛ:r/ “beautiful.” In southern Finistère, where I have concentrated my research for years, /kɛ:r/ “expensive” has been raised to [ki:r]. This occurs in other environments: <ken> “anymore” [kɛ:n] > [ki:n], <pez> “peas” [pɛ:z] > [pi:z]... (but... <biz> “finger” > [bɛ:z]!). The same process as in ME occurs with the shift from /ɔ:/ > /u:/, also occurring in the same region.

is nothing new about this, it is worth repeating here because it focuses our attention on the key role played by front mid [ɛ:] as a bridge vowel in the shift to [e:] and finally to [i:]. In Massachusetts, we observe that all three of these pronunciations of *Meat* words were in competition, sometimes in the same speech communities. One can only wonder what the sociolinguistic judgements about these variant pronunciations were.

In the context of the Great Vowel Shift, *Meat* vowels evolved at different rates of speed and sometimes in different directions according to the region, variety and speech community. The process of the shift was often halted at different stages which explains why one can still hear fragments of pronunciations of earlier times in modern varieties such as diphthongized variants of *Meat* words as in ['meɪt ɪ 'prɛ:tɪz] “meat and potatoes” (German, personal notes, Lancashire, cf. Wright (1905)).

More to the point, as we witnessed in the preceding chapter, the evidence from Franklin, Barlow, Dwight and other New England poets demonstrates that their *Meat* words occasionally vacillated between older [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] variants and the more common [i:]. The difficulty is in distinguishing which is which within the context of the poetry itself. Likewise, their *Meat* vowels often remain frozen at a stage that included [ɛ: ~ ɛ: ~ ɛ:]. Furthermore, in the last chapter we recorded numerous instances when these *Meat* words are rhymed with *Face* words [ɛ:] and *Bare* words, with the latter wavering between [ɛ:ɪ] and [æ:ɪ]. In New England and southern England, the general tendency was to lower this [æ(:)ɪ] diphthong to [a:ɪ ~ ɑ:ɪ]. As we shall see in Chapters 18-21, the treatment of back mid vowels ([ɑ(:)], [ɒ(:)], [ɔ(:)]... to [u(:)]) is even more complex and, at certain levels, the analysis is tenuous, especially for New England (cf. “New England short u and short o” (Chapters 20-22)).

We shall also see, as we did above for the shift from short ME /i/ > /ɛ/, that downward shifts of short vowels are also critical to our understanding of not only New England English but to multiple varieties where it occurred in both American and English dialects, namely, [ɪ] > [ɛ] and [ɛ] > [æ]. Note it is likely that the quality of the vowels in all these cases were probably lax.

With respect to long vowels, it is obvious that, from a cross-dialectal perspective, the GVS did not occur in a uniform manner and certainly not within the same temporal framework in America, England or in the English-speaking regions of Wales, Scotland or Ireland. What follows is an outline of some of the major phonological changes that occurred from 1500 to about 1800 in England and America. For the reason just discussed, it is difficult to disentangle the histories of not only *Meet* and *Meat* words but also *Meat* and *Mate* words and, at times, the data can only be presented in an overlapping fashion.

1. ME /ɛ:/, ME /a:/ > [ɛ: ~ ɐ] and ME /ai/ > [æi ~ ɛi ~ ɛ:]

1.1 The New England Poets

Barlow and Dwight's rhymes as well as those of other contemporary American poets reinforce the observations above suggesting that, as late as the early 19th century, a time when *Meat* words were largely pronounced [i:] by Type C2 and D speakers, American poets continued to pronounce them [ɐ: ~ ɐ:] and this, of course, includes Franklin. Indeed, the low-mid [ɛ:] pronunciation of *Meat* words was common in the 16th century beside the highly innovative [i:] pronunciation recorded in London by Bellot in 1586. This implies to me that competing [ɐ:] and [ɛ:] pronunciations were also in the game. Here we are talking about speakers blending Type B2 and C1 features (roughly 1650-1700).

We have already considered that <ea> spelling may have corresponded to [ɛi] pronunciations (cf. Franklin's *see* ~ *courtesy* rhymes, Chapter 16). The examples are numerous. Dwight rhymes *tea* [tɛ: ~ tɛi?] ~ *sway* [swɛ: ~ swɛi?] ~ *away* [ə'wɛ: ~ ə'wɛi?]. The possibility of a diphthongal realization here is justified by the fact that Orbeck shows that *Wait* words were still diphthongal in Massachusetts, so that [ə'wɛi] and [ə'wæi] were certainly possibilities. In certain varieties of Irish English, but also in England (cf. Shorrocks 1998: 178), *tea* [tɛ:] is still a common pronunciation. I have concluded that Franklin's pronunciation of *Wait* words was innovative [ɛ:].

As we saw in the preceding chapter, Dwight also rhymes *severe* [se'vɛ:ɪ] (pronounced as in French) ~ *near* [nɛ:ɪ] ~ *there* [ðɛ:ɪ] as well as with *tear* (n.) [tɛ:ɪ], while *sincere* [sɪn'sɛ:ɪ] is rhymed with *where* [(h)wɛ:ɪ ~ (h)uɛ:ɪ] (for the vocalic realization of <w> see Chapters 23 and 27). This reinforces observations made in Chapter 17. Note that [ʌ] ([hw- ~ hu-]) was rare in New England, a region where [w- ~ u-] was the rule, but more common in the Middle and Southern colonies as is still the case today (cf. Consonants, Chapter 23). Yet, as we shall, both Franklin (1768, 1779) and Webster (1789) insisted on its use for reasons of linguistic tradition. It therefore is part of Franklin's proto-phonemic inventory of characters (cf. Chapters 25 and 26).

Dwight rhymes *near* [nɛ:ɪ] ~ *here* [hɛ:ɪ] as well as *here* ~ *tear* (vb) and *dear* ~ *air* ~ *here*. If they are perfect rhymes, as they appear to be, the phonetic range is basically [ɛ:ɪ ~ ɐ:ɪ ~ ɛ:ɪ]. Significantly, this interpretation is rendered far more credible by Trudgill (2016, 193), who indicates that the pronunciation of "here" in his native Norfolk is still homophonous with "hair"!

Nevertheless, we shall see that the Hempstead records (NY) spell *near* as *nare* [nɛ:ɪ ~ næ:ɪ] (1665), *nar* [næ:ɪ ~ na:ɪ?] (1686) (cf. Appendix 3). It is also clear that, dialectally, the interplay between ME /er/ [ɛ(:)ɪ] and ME /ar/ [æ(:)ɪ], and probably [a:ɪ] in New England, was common and, most likely, a feature of Franklin's own

idiolect (cf. Chapter 26). Whether he had this lowered [a:ɪ] realization in his own speech is difficult to determine, however, because there is no sign of its existence in his RMS, probably because this feature was considered “vulgar” in London at the time (cf. Walker, 1791). Wright (1905, 537) records *near* as [nɑ:ɪ], [næɪ] and [nɛɪ] for parts of the North of England and Scotland and has “here” [hɛəɪ] for Norfolk (as it still is today, Trudgill 2016) and Suffolk and “near” [neəɪ] for Staffordshire, Leicestershire and Suffolk (Wright, 1905, 482). These kinds of data demonstrate once again the danger of imposing strict diachronic dates for sound shifts that can result in a form of tunnel vision that distorts or obscures the overall picture of language change.

In the 1748 issue of his *Poor Richard's Almanack*, Franklin composes the following rhymed couplet:

Finikin Dick, curs'd with nice *Taste*,
Ne'er meets with good dinner, half starv'd at a *feast*.

Recall that Dobson suggests words of French origin such as *feast*, *beast*, *pleasure*, etc. were pronounced with long [ɛ:], and this rhyme would appear to provide clear evidence that Franklin still pronounced *feast* within this phonetic range: [ɛ: ~ ɛ̃: ~ ɛ:], most likely either of the last two vowels. But this interpretation could be hampered by what appears to be a near rhyme between *guest* [gɛ:st ~ gest] ~ *feast* [fɛ:st] (1750). Dwight also rhymes *feast* ~ *guest* in his *Greenfield Hill* as well as *feast* ~ *rest* (twice) and *feast* ~ *bless'd*. Franklin matches *guest* ~ *increas'd* with “increased” pronounced with a long [ɛ:]. For this reason, doubts arise regarding the precise vowel quantity and quality of *guest*, *rest* and *bless'd*. Was the vowel longer and slightly higher than [ɛ] in these examples, that is, as a variant in the range of [ɛ: ~ ɛ̃: ~ ɛ̃ə]?

Barlow (*Columbiad*, 1807) also has *feast* rhyming with not only *rest* [ɹɛst ~ ɹɛ-st?] but also *west* [wɛst ~ wɛ-st?], *guest* [gɛst ~ gɛ-st?], *ceased* [sɛ:st] and *releas* [rɹɹɛ:st] (i.e. “released”). This suggests that *guest*, *rest*, *bless'd* and *west* (like short ME /i/) may have also been subject to lengthening. In the southern US states today, all these normally short vowels can undergo breaking [ɛ̃ə ~ ɛ̃? ~ ẽə?] and this may very well be the reflex of an older tendency in EME dialects to lengthen vowels which were normally short in ME.³

Overall, the evidence in this corpus is mixed and it is impossible to come to any definitive conclusions regarding the exact quantity or quality of these vowels. The only compromise here appears to be that 18th-century “short” vowels in the colonial koines were slightly longer than their RP equivalents, and this could be the case across the spectrum of short “lax” vowels. After all, we have

3 Interestingly, Modern Breton also has *fest* [fɛst] for “feast,” a word which was also borrowed from Old French *fest*, appare also with short [ɛ].

already pointed out in Chapter 17 that American “lax” vowels, like English West Country lax vowels (Wells, 1989), are generally longer than their RP equivalents. Dialectal evidence obtained from English 19th- and 20th-century varieties tends to support this.

Overall, the weight of the evidence among American poets is in support of [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] (~ ɛ:] pronunciation for the majority of words spelt <ea>, even those that are short today (cf. Görlach’s citation, Chapter 17). This was the case for the 17th-century Massachusetts town records. We have already seen in the preceding section that this is also occasionally true for <ee>, <ei>, ie> and <eCe> spellings (cf. Chapter 17).

1.2 Face ~ Meat Rhymes

All the New England poets rhyme *Face* and *Meat* words (cf. ME /a:/ below). I have interpreted *Face* and *Meat* vowels to be in the vicinity of [ɛ: ~ ɛ:]. For practical reasons, I have only transcribed [ɛ:] in the following examples. Timothy Dwight (1752-1817) in his *Conquest of Canaan* (1785) quite regularly rhymes *name* [nɛ:m] ~ *beam* [bɛ:m] and *forsake* [fɔɪsɛ:k] ~ *speak* [spɛ:k] and, in his *Greenfield Hill* (1794) he matches *flame* [flɛ:m] ~ *gleam* [glɛ:m] as well as *flame* ~ *beam* [bɛ:m], *flame* ~ *stream* [striɛ:m]. Other examples from the same source are *beam* ~ *again* [ə'gɛ:n], *beam* [bɛ:m] ~ *came* [kɛ:m] as well as his rhymed tercet with *beam* ~ *dream* ~ *stream*, along with *esteem* ~ *beam*. Recall Wilmot’s rhyme of “esteem” [ɛ'sti:m] ~ “him” [hi:m] one hundred years earlier showing that a nobleman was already pronouncing such words with innovative [i:] (Chapter 17). In many cases, the New England pronunciation appears to harken back to the Type C1 phase and at times, Type B2 (i.e. the *Wait* diphthong [æi]).

Joel Barlow (*Columbiad*, 1807) gives numerous examples which reinforce what has just been observed: *James* [dʒɛ:mz]⁴ ~ *streams* [striɛ:mz], *wave* [wɛ:v] ~ *heave* [hɛ:v], while J. B. Ladd (1764-1786, Rhode Island) offers the following rhyme: *debate* [de'bɛ:t] ~ *seat* [sɛ:t]. This kind of evidence seemingly confirms the pronunciation for early examples from the town records such as *sate* (1683) being pronounced [sɛ:t] in the Groton records cited above. Note also *shades* [ʃɛ:dz] ~ *meads* [mɛ:dz] and *face* [fɛ:s] ~ *peace* [pɛ:s] (cited in Krapp, 1925).

John Trumbull of Hartford, Connecticut, (1820) has the following rhymes: *fate* [fɛ:t] ~ *deceit* [de'sɛ:t]. Shorrocks (1998) recorded this same pronunciation of “deceit” in Bolton two decades ago, a pronunciation shared by Franklin. Trumbull rhymes *base* [bɛ:s] ~ *seas* [sɛ:z], *crazy* ['kɪɛ:zi] ~ *uneasy* [ʌn'ɛ:zi], *waste* [wɛ:st] ~ *ceased* [sɛ:st], while Philip Freneau (b. 1752 in New York, d. in New

4 Nevertheless, an alternate 17th-century pronunciation of “James” was [dʒi:mz] which was conserved, at least until recently, in the contemporary Virginian pronunciation of the James River (named after King James I).

Jersey, 1832), like Dwight, matches *name* [nɛ:m] ~ *dream* [dɹɛ:m] and, in Samuel Woodward's "Heroes of the Lake" (1814) *flame* [flɛ:m] ~ *stream* [stɹɛ:m] and *flame* ~ *gleam* [glɛ:m] (cited by Krapp, 1925, 128).

Nevertheless, if the poets truly did purposely play on older dialect usage to formulate their rhymes, asserting that *stream*, *speak* and *beam* are always pronounced as [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] in natural speech could be a premature assumption. Yet, evidence from the New England and New York town records offers many examples of the same kind, suggesting that this was still the dominant realization of these and other *Meat* words throughout the 18th century, even if [i:] was steadily gaining ground. Furthermore, the uniformity of the rhymes in these poems is quite overwhelming, suggesting that the [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] pronunciations of *Meat* words are far more than simple poetic conventions.

A case in point is Dwight's triple rhyme of *stream* [stɹɛ:m] ~ *flame* [flɛ:m] ~ *came* [kɛ:m] and *stream* ~ *beam* [bɛ:m] as well as his rhymes of *neat* [nɛ:t] ~ *state* [stɛ:t] and *neat* [nɛ:t] ~ *great* [grɛ:t] and *neat* [nɛ:t] ~ *meat* [mɛ:t]. But, if so, what are we to make of Dwight's triple rhyme of *dream* ~ *stream* ~ *theme* or *neat* ~ *sweet*? Does this necessarily imply that the realization of both words was [nɛ:t] ~ [swɛ:t], or [ni:t] ~ [swi:t]? We have seen in Chapter 17 that the former is the most likely. It's important to point out that Orbeck (1927, 36) also shows that both pronunciations were possible: *strem* [stɹɛ:m] (Plymouth, 1703) and *streem* [stɹi:m] (Dedham, 1682) showing that [i:] was already in the Massachusetts feature pool.

In Chapter 17, I asserted that in 17th-century Massachusetts, *Meat* and *Face* rhymes were still [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] (contrast with Bellot's /ɛ:/ pronunciation *Meat* tokens) while *Wait* words were still pronounced [ɛi] and occasionally [æi] and sometimes confused with *Price* [pɹɛis] words as in *hayway* for "highway," presumably ['hei,wei]. In Chapter 16, we saw that the dominant pronunciation of *Price* words in Massachusetts during the early 17th century was [ɛi], with [əi] only gaining ground during the second half of that century. The latter diphthong was most likely associated with polite London usage.

This is interesting on two counts. First, if taken literally, this could suggest that *Price* words were still frozen, at least for some New England speakers, at the [ɛi] stage (a pronunciation normally associated with late ME of the 15th and 16th centuries) and, secondly, if true, the frequent New England *Wait* ~ *Meat* rhymes such as *sea* ~ *way* could simply suggest [ɛ:] for both but occasional [weɪt] ~ [meɪt] and [seɪ] ~ [wei] (or [sɛ:] ~ [wɛ:]) realizations are not out of the question. Note the existence modern Lancashire ['meɪt ən 'pɹɛ:tɪz] "meat and potatoes" (Deane, German, personal notes)!

In Chapter 16, I proposed that *Price* and *Fleece* words may have had similar [əi ~ ɛi] diphthongal fluctuations. At this stage, there is no way of knowing with any degree of certainty, but the hypothesis of diphthongal *See* or *Sea* words

cannot be entirely ruled out. We have seen that they still exist today in English regional dialects (cf. Chapter 15).

Questions about the precise quality and length of such vowels reveal considerable variation in pronunciation, coupled with considerable poetic license on the part of the poets.

1.3 *Face* and *Meat* Rhymes in Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanack*

To repeat once again, for the reasons just presented, rather than *Meat* tokens as [ɛ:] during the B2 > C1 phase, I consider two or even three variant forms [ɛ: ~ ɛ̣: ~ ɛ̣:] were floating around in the different colonial koinés. The 1710 poem composed by Franklin's uncle (Benjamin the Elder) examined above confirms that both he and certainly Franklin's father Josiah pronounced these words in the conservative Northamptonshire way, that is in Mazarin's "morbid C1" (i.e. [ɛ: ~ ɛ̣: (~ ɛ̣:)]), which they may have considered more fashionable, or at least natural, than [i:]. We can thus say with some assurance that Franklin also shared this pronunciation, at least as a young boy and adolescent. Two hundred years after Bellot (1586) had signalled the existence of ME /ɛ:/ > /i:/ in the London vernacular, New England poets still retained [ɛ: ~ ɛ̣: (~ ɛ̣:)], not only in *Meat* words, but also in some *Fleece* words (alongside innovative [i:]).

Franklin's poems provide a wealth of precious information regarding his natural New England English that is very much in line with what has just been said for the poets of his countrymen, but also the New England town records. Because of the importance of this conservative pronunciation of *Meat* vowels for coming discussions, I have included numerous examples from Franklin's poems which I have organized in the form of lists. Just as with the New England poets above, Franklin offers numerous *Face* ~ *Meat* rhymes. The range of pronunciation of both categories in these examples was probably [ɛ: ~ ɛ̣:]. As stated elsewhere, to simplify, I have indicated only the mid [ɛ̣:] bridge vowel here. I shall start with this category.

<i>waves</i> ~ <i>leaves</i>	[wɛ:vz] ~ [lɛ:vz] ⁵	(1743)
<i>shade</i> ~ <i>mead</i>	[ʃɛ:d] ~ [mɛ:d]	(1746)
<i>embrace</i> ~ <i>peace</i>	[ɛm'brɛ:s] ~ [pɛ:s]	(1747)
<i>disgrace</i> ~ <i>peace</i>	[dɪs'grɛ:s] ~ [pɛ:s]	(1747)
<i>name</i> ~ <i>blaspheme</i>	[nɛ:m] ~ [blæs'fɛ:m]	(1747)
<i>hate</i> ~ <i>defeat</i>	[hɛ:t] ~ [dr'fɛ:t]	(1747)
<i>taste</i> ~ <i>feast</i>	[tɛ:st] ~ [fɛ:st]	(1747 & 1748)

5 In all such <ea> examples, the [ɛ̣:] variant should be envisaged.

<i>blaze ~ seas</i>	[blɛ:z] ~ [sɛ:z]	(1748)
<i>share ~ year</i>	[ʃɛ:ɪ] ~ [jɛ:ɪ]	(1748)
<i>lace ~ peace</i>	[lɛ:s] ~ [pɛ:s]	(1749)
<i>are ~ fear</i>	[ɛ:ɪ] ~ [fɛ:ɪ]	(1749)
<i>are ~ fair</i>	[ɛ:ɪ] ~ [fɛ:ɪ]	(1749)

The second classification concerns a mix of *Meat*, *Wait*, *Face* and *Dress* words, all pronounced as [ɛ: ~ ε:].

<i>peace ~ guest</i>	[pɛ:s] ~ [ɡɛst ~ ɡɛ-st]	(1733)
<i>retreat ~ great</i>	[rɪtɪɛ:t] ~ [ɡɪɛ:t]	(1746)
<i>Palaces ~ pleases</i>	[ˈpæləseɪz] ~ [ˈplɛ:zeɪz]	(1751)
<i>guest ~ increas'd</i>	[ɡɛst ~ ɡɛ-st] ~ [ɪŋˈkɪɛ:st]	(1751)
<i>fair ~ sincere</i>	[fɛ:ɪ] ~ [sɪnˈsɛ:ɪ]	(1749)

He also gives triple rhymes such as:

<i>prepare ~ there ~ sphere</i>	[prɛˈpɛ:ɪ] ~ [ðɛ:ɪ] ~ [sfɛ:ɪ]	(1748)
<i>hear ~ err ~ infer</i>	[hɛ:ɪ] ~ [ɛ:ɪ] ~ [ɪnˈfɛ:ɪ]	(1749)
<i>where ~ there ~ rear</i>	[(h)uɛ:ɪ] ~ [ðɛ:ɪ] ~ [rɛ:ɪ]	(1751)

Given the nature of the preceding examples, and by deduction, it is very probable that the following rhymes were all pronounced [ɛ: ~ ε:].

<i>fears ~ bears</i>	[fɛ:ɪz] ~ [bɛ:ɪz]	(1742)
<i>fear ~ dear</i>	[fɛ:ɪ] ~ [dɛ:ɪ]	(1736)
<i>fear ~ hear</i>	[fɛ:ɪ] ~ [hɛ:ɪ]	(1736)
<i>fear ~ steer</i>	[fɛ:ɪ] ~ [stɛ:ɪ]	(1749)
<i>fear ~ appear</i>	[fɛ:ɪ] ~ [əˈpɛ:ɪ]	(1749)
<i>year ~ share</i>	[jɛ:ɪ] ~ [ʃɛ:ɪ]	(1748)
<i>year ~ disappear</i>	[jɛ:ɪ] ~ [dɪsəˈpɛ:ɪ]	(1739)
<i>year ~ dear</i>	[jɛ:ɪ] ~ [dɛ:ɪ]	(1742)
<i>year ~ clear</i>	[jɛ:ɪ] ~ [klɛ:ɪ]	(1749)
<i>year ~ chear</i>	[jɛ:ɪ] ~ [tʃɛ:ɪ]	(1756) (“cheer”)
<i>year ~ ear</i>	[jɛ:ɪ] ~ [ɛ:ɪ]	(1752)

<i>ear</i> ⁶ ~ <i>bear</i>	[ɛ:ɪ] ~ [bɛ:ɪ]	(1746)
<i>ear</i> ~ <i>hear</i>	[ɛ:ɪ] ~ [hɛ:ɪ]	(1758)
<i>ear</i> ~ <i>appear</i>	[ɛ:ɪ] ~ [ə'pɛ:ɪ]	(1743)
<i>appear</i> ~ <i>dear</i>	[ə'pɛ:ɪ] ~ [dɛ:ɪ]	(1743)
<i>tear</i> (n.) ~ <i>fear</i>	[tɛ:ɪ] ~ [fɛ:ɪ]	(1749)
<i>rears</i> ~ <i>appears</i>	[ɪɛ:ɪz] ~ [ə'pɛ:ɪz]	(1758)
<i>wear</i> ~ <i>appear</i>	[wɛ:ɪ] ~ [ə'pɛ:ɪ]	(1757)
<i>wear</i> ~ <i>revere</i>	[wɛ:ɪ] ~ [ɪɛ'vɛ:ɪ]	(1758)
<i>appears</i> ~ <i>spheres</i>	[ə'pɛ:ɪz] ~ [sfɛ:ɪz]	(1756)
<i>cheat</i> ~ <i>defeat</i>	[tʃɛ:t] ~ [dɛ'fɛ:t]	(1757)
<i>yet</i> ~ <i>repeat</i>	[jɛt ~ jɛ:t] ~ [ɪɛ'pɛ:t]	(1757)
<i>were</i> ~ <i>hear</i>	[wɛ:ɪ] ~ [hɛ:ɪ]	(1736)
<i>were</i> ~ <i>year</i>	[wɛ:ɪ] ~ [jɛ:ɪ]	(1736)
<i>were</i> ~ <i>year</i>	[wɛ:ɪ] ~ [jɛ:ɪ]	(1737)
<i>were</i> ~ <i>fare</i>	[wɛ:ɪ] ~ [fɛ:ɪ]	(1756)

Although a few of these examples could be argued to have had [i:] realizations, overall, the evidence supports the conclusion that Franklin's *Face* and *Meat* tokens were still largely realized as [ɛ: ~ ɛ: ~ (ɛ:)?] respectively, the common denominator (or bridge vowel) being mid [ɛ:].

Indeed, his <ea> spellings of words traditionally spelt <ee> such as *chear* for “cheer,” *compleat* for “complete” provide further evidence of an [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] pronunciation. Orbeck's data show that <ea> spellings were regularly used by certain clerks for *Face* words. Once again, only a few decades before Franklin's birth, Miège claimed that “complete” was pronounced [ɛ:] in the 1680s (Mazarin, 2020), showing that the New Englanders were just a step behind with regard to this more innovative pronunciation. In Chapter 16, based on Breton (Cornouaillais) evidence I have collected firsthand, I argued that once the [ɛ:] stage was reached, the shift to [i:] was just a question of time, especially before /d/, /n/ and /r/.

Referring to Franklin's RMS, Mazarin (2020, 8) points out that “Franklin is the first of our grammarians to use an e symbol for *Face*. He can thus use continental ee for his low-mid or true-mid *Face* because he lacks the contrastive high-mid *Meat* for which Miège and Ludwig must reserve their é and eh signs.” This is both a perceptive and crucial observation, however, as I indicated above, it is improbable that Franklin's native *Face* or *Meat* words were pronounced as

6 Cf. ['ejə ~ 'ejə] *eyer* Hempstead, NY, 1695.

high-mid front vowels.

We shall see in Chapters 29 and 30 that, in 1786, Franklin gave Webster all his notes and explanations for his RMS, including the six lead characters he had cast, with the hope that Webster would adopt his system. Nevertheless, Webster refused implement his scheme, possibly because he did not understand the technical dimension of his scheme or because he did not realize the importance of Franklin's innovations in phonetics. For instance, he unfortunately insisted on writing *Face* words with <a> and *Fleece* and *Meat* words with <ee> thus throwing his entire system of transcription out of kilter and, from the outset, destroying any chance that his spelling reform would ever be adopted.

Considering that *Poor Richard's Almanack* was intended for a vernacular-speaking, albeit literate readership, it is equally probable that the latter considered these older pronunciations as natural, appropriate and correct. We have also seen that these realizations are part and parcel of a tradition of pronunciation recorded by the orthoepists a century or more before him. The fact that Franklin and Webster only seem to have consulted the works of 16th- and 17th-century orthoepists seems to be another indication that they (Webster in particular) were seeking to preserve the "purity" of the English that had been spoken during England's "golden age." Webster was convinced that the English of that time had been best preserved in New England (cf. Chapters 29 and 30). Valorizing conservative pronunciations was more ideological than it was linguistic. The irony here is that Franklin's natural speech was indeed an excellent reflection of this golden age. While Franklin agreed that England's period had passed, his vision of this past was far more political than linguistic and that, in his RMS, he did not hesitate to adopt the English innovations that Webster criticized with such vehemence. As we shall see (Chapter 24), the New Englanders' knowledge of 16th-, 17th- and 18th-century English poetry (Shakespeare, Donne, Pope) may also have encouraged the use of such archaic rhymes.

Barlow rhymes *career* ~ *year*, *ear* ~ *steer* at a time when, as shown above, *ear* and *year* were still [ɛː] and [jɛː]. This demonstrates that *steer* and *career* were also pronounced with [ɛː]. Similarly, Franklin also rhymes *sphere* ~ *career* [kə'ɛː] (*career* < Fr. *carrière*) (1738), demonstrating that he too pronounced the latter [sfɛː] ~ [kə'ɛː] (cf. Chapter 17 for his "sphere" rhymes). Like Barlow, Franklin has *steer* rhyme with both *year* and *fear*, reinforcing the idea that *steer* could still be realized as [stɛː] in the middle of the 18th century. Indeed, *fear* was still pronounced [fɛː] by the Dorset poet William Barnes in 1844! As we shall see in Part IV, all such words are transcribed /i:/ in his RMS.

Nevertheless, at a time when accents were not "fixed," as both Samuel Johnson and Polly Stevenson expressed it, this could be yet another case where the poets occasionally mixed older pronunciations with more innovative ones

and examples of this kind are interspersed throughout their poetic works. Once again, sociolinguistically, this could only have been accomplished with words which were pronounced in a register that was viewed as appropriate by both the poets and the listeners of such poetry. Other less elegant pronunciations were pushed to the side, the consequence being that many “vulgar” elements of the phonetic ranges noted here were not permitted in formal contexts.

To repeat, there is little doubt then that these lower (i.e. open) [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] realizations reflect pronunciations which are more reminiscent of Type C1 speakers of late 17th century than the C2 London speakers of the second half of the 18th century. If so, Lass’s Lineage III (Figure 17.1), representing the general London standard, appears to have remained the model for North Americans for far longer than for educated 18th-century Londoners (cf. Mazarin’s diachronic phases, Types A through D in Chapter 15). This was a time when innovations stemming from the vernacular or “popular” Lineage II speakers were becoming the rule in London. It is the tension and competition between these two models that appear in the scheme Franklin presents in his RMS, many of which Webster rejected. Revealing this sociolinguistic tension is the entire point of Part III.

1.4 Contemporary English Examples

If one is surprised by the longevity of the C1 stage in America, the persistence of older realizations of ME /ɛ:/ are even more striking in the contemporary English and Scottish dialects (i.e. until a generation ago). They also give added weight to the hypotheses proposed above. Shorrocks (1998, 179) records the following list of <ea> words in contemporary Bolton, Lancashire. These examples consist of a long vowel and differ only in terms of quality. He transcribes them as follows: *please* [plɛ:z], *cheat* [tʃɛ:t], *cheap* [tʃɛ:p]. Note, however, the second category of words have [ɛ:]: *weak* [wɛ:k], *creature* [ˈkɹɛ:tʃəɹ], *measles* [ˈmɛ:zlz], *tea* [tɛ:], *greasy* [ˈɡɹɛ:si]... These mid front vowels can still be heard among the elderly in Lancashire and elsewhere in England and Wales today. Note in passing Shorrocks’s realization of *Face* tokens (1998, 177): *hate* [hɛ:t], *lace* [lɛ:s], *gate* [ɡɛ:t], *name* [nɛ:m], *late* [lɛ:t] and *lane* [lɛ:n] are pronounced precisely in the same manner as Franklin indicates in his poems. Does this mean that Franklin spoke like a Lancashire man? In terms of this realization of *Meat* words, the answer is yes, but the real point here is that this “Lancashire” pronunciation was at one time shared throughout much of 18th-century England.⁷

7 After I had submitted this book for proofreading, I came across Whitehouse’s excellent article on New England short o (Whitehouse, 1941) who also observed that colonial American pronunciation shared many characteristics with Lancashire! He also concluded that the characteristics of Lancashire dialect were once shared more broadly. Whitehouse was a native of Hull, Yorkshire.

Burton states that “Dorset ē occurs in some ea words some of the time, such words being pronounced in the dialect with either /i:/ or /e:/” (i.e. [ɛ:]). Other <ea> words, such as *heat* had previously been shortened and were pronounced as [hɛt] or [jɛt]. We have seen that Lowell gives *het* [hɛt] as the preterit of “to heat” (cf. also Hall and Shorrocks pronunciations of *clean* as [klɛn] and [tlɛn] respectively). Burton cites Ellis, who recorded 200 *Meat* words in the West of England which he associated with “French <é>” [ɛ:]. This is more in line with Miège’s observations than mine. Included in Ellis’ list of [ɛ:] pronunciations is *feast, beast, heard, lean, leap, afeared...* (Burton, 2010, 75).

As stated in the introduction to mid front vowels in Chapter 17, Shorrocks (1998, 176) has demonstrated that /ɛ:/ and /ɛ:/ are still phonemic in conservative Bolton speech with /kɛ:lt/, meaning “beaten” or “overtaken,” as opposed to /kɛ:lt/, meaning “cowardly.” Minimal pairs demonstrating this phonemic distinction are /ɛ:s/ “ace” versus /ɛ:s/ “house,” /lɛ:s/ “lace” versus /lɛ:s/ “louse,” etc. However, this phonemic distinction here obviously has another source than ME /ɛ:/ <ee> vs ME /ɛ:/ <ea> phonemes. Having said that, such examples demonstrate once again that the dialectal reality on the ground has always been far richer, but also more baffling at times, than we care to imagine. It also highlights the fact that each dialect has its own phonemic system that is often at odds with that of RP or GA. Furthermore, this also informs us about the kinds of registers and dialects of English that Franklin was exposed to during his formative years in Boston (1706-1723), Philadelphia (1723-1725) and London (1725-1726).

2. Inherent Instability: [ɛ:] > [ɛ] / [ɛ] > [ɛ:]

MacKintosh (1797) points out that *bread, dead, head, knead, lead* (vb) were all pronounced with long [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] which conforms to Dobson’s observations (Dobson, 1968, 639-641). Krapp (1925, 90) claims that these pronunciations of long [ɛ:] in *dead* and *head* were still heard during the first half of the 20th century. I have stated on several occasions that these long realizations and their offshoots are still alive and well in the American South (in both WNSAE and AAVE) (e.g., *head* [hɛ:d ~ 'hɛ:ɪd ~ 'hɛjɪd]).

On the other hand, MacKintosh describes *spread, stead, thread, weapon, early* and *beat* as all being pronounced with short [ɛ]. Once again, these shortened pronunciations tie in well with Shorrocks’ evidence for Bolton, who records *beat* [bjɛt], *beaten* [bjɛtn] but *head* [jɛd], *clean* [tlɛn] (beside [kli:n]). For his part, Hall (1942, 14) records *klen* [klɛn] for Tennessee. Shorrocks (ibid.) records *eaten* ['ɛtn], etc. (cf. Lancashire <ea> [ɛ:] > [æ:] below). Note the Lancashire proverb: [bjɛd 'ɛtnz ʃu:n fə'gɛtn], “Bread eaten is soon forgotten” (German, Deane, Lancs.). Sir Isaac Newton (1661) advocated a short vowel in “eaten,” spelling it *etn* ['ɛtn], with syllabic [n], while he was at Cambridge in 1661. Notice also the difference

in pronunciation between GA “ate” [et] and RP [ɛt]. Lowell (1848) gives spells “great” and “greater” *gret* and *gretter* respectively suggesting that they were pronounced [gɹɛt] and [gɹɛtəɹ].

Nevertheless, keeping Lord Yonge’s pronunciation of *great* [gɹi:t] in mind, in some cases this ME /ɛ:/ simply followed the classic GVS raising of *Meat* words. This suggests that the RP/GA history of “great” was that it was first shortened to [gɹɛt], as seen in Lowell’s examples, and then, after the GVS was complete in most regions, it was again lengthened to [gɹɛ:t]. A diphthongal variety of it must have been in competition with it, perhaps modelled on *Wait* words, where it finally moved on to RP/GA [gɹɛit].

Another example [ɛ:] > [i:] is “weapon” which, in the 19th-century American West, was pronounced [ˈwi:pən]. Conversely, it is likely that the current diphthongal /eɪ/ pronunciation of RP/GA results from a relatively recent raising and lengthening of Lowell’s short /ɛ/ > [ɛ:] > [eɪ] perhaps on analogy with *Wait* words which were still diphthongized.

2.1 ME /er/

Given that Franklin was born in 1706, he certainly heard reflexes of ME /er/ ~ ME /ar/ ~ ME /air/ pronounced [ɛ:ɹ ~ ɛ:ɹ] and [æ:ɹ] (and [æjəɹ] for ME /air/) throughout the 18th century alongside centralized [əɹ]. This is not out of line with English orthoepists’ observations about B2 and C1 speakers during the 17th century. As late as 19th century, Barnes gives the Dorset pronunciation of “air” as [æiɹ ~ æiə] making this variant interpretation of Franklin’s Boston pronunciation more credible (Burton, 2010, 111). Recall that these [æi] pronunciations are associated with Mazarin’s oldest Type A dialect, that is, 16th-century English! The common pronunciation of Norfolk *Wait* words is also still [æi] and serves as another warning to view precise dating of sound changes with the utmost caution.

Again, one must allow for a certain amount of poetic license regarding the poets’ adaptation of certain combinations of rhymes given that, from a contemporary standpoint, they are not always easily matched (cf. perfect and imperfect rhymes above). Important to remember, however, is the fact that perfect or at least near-perfect rhymes are by far in the majority with an average of 80%-85%+. The remaining 15% to 20% of the so-called “imperfect” rhymes I identified initially in Chapter 15 (in Barlow, Dwight and Franklin’s poems) are, as we are beginning to see, also perfect or, at least, near-perfect rhymes. The most challenging examples will be discussed in Chapters 20 through 23.

2.2 A Summary of the Evidence

We have seen that the treatment of ME /ɛ:/ and ME /ɛ:/ did not develop in the same way in all varieties. This explains the numerous irregularities in the pronunciation of words spelt <ea>, <ee> and <ie>, not only in contemporary RP/GA but also in the non-standard varieties, all of which are hybrid systems resulting from centuries of interdialectal contact and dialect mixing.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the pivotal role played by [ɛ:] and [ɛ:] in the raising of these vowels was crucial in this GVS process.

Fig. 18.1 Late 18th-century New England and London treatments of ME /ɛ:/ > /i:/.

Dialect	Key word	Stages of development	Dialect type
London (popular)	Fleece	ME [ɛ:] > [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] > [i:]	C2
London	Meat	ME [ɛ:] > [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] > [i:]	C2
New England	Fleece	ME [ɛ:] > [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] > [ɛ: ~ i:]	A (1550)/B1
New England	Meat	ME [ɛ:] > [ɛ: ~ ɛ: ~ ɛ:] > [ɛ:] ([i:])	C1

In 18th-century New England, *Fleece* words would have had a phonetic range of [ɛ: ~ ɛ: ~ i:], with growing dominance of [i:] by the end of the 17th century, while *Meat* words would have been roughly represented by [ɛ: ~ ɛ: ~ ɛ: ~ i:] with a preference for [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] in Franklin’s idiolect/sociolect. Once again, while he was in London, he almost certainly was adept at code-switching to innovative /i:/, a pronunciation he promotes in his RMS.

The sound changes implied in this table certainly do not correspond to the patterns of change occurring within neat time periods that one normally observes in studies of the history of RP or GP. What we have seen above corresponds better to the broad, overlapping and coexisting dialect types defined by Mazarin, which rose and fell over decades and even centuries. The numerous examples given in this book of present-day non-standard treatments of the English vocalic system demonstrate that the process is still under way.

3. ME /ɛ/ > /ɪ/: The “Pin-Pen” Merger

The raising and lowering of front lax vowels is an important but often neglected component of the phonological history of English.

In Chapter 16, in the section on ME short /i/ [i], we saw that it was often the lax form of this vowel, [ɪ], that was lowered to [ɛ], particularly in areas such as Suffolk and in the London area more generally. Following the logic expressed

in the introduction to mid vowels (Chapter 17), the opposite process shall now be examined, that is, [ɛ] > [ɪ] which presumably developed along the following path [ɛ > ɐ > ɪ]. We have already made numerous references to this shift, otherwise known as the *pin-pen* merger. Nevertheless, not only was ME /ɛ/ raised to /ɪ/, but we shall see that it was also frequently lowered to /æ/ (cf. next section below). In addition, depending on the period and variety under consideration, all these front short vowels could be subjected to tensing and lengthening as demonstrated by the 16th- and 17th-century English orthoepists.

In this subsection, we shall examine numerous examples of the *pin-pen* merger. Dobson (1968, 567-568) suggests that the shift from [ɛ] > [ɪ] “doubtless relates to vulgar Southern English.” He states that it is recorded in the 13th century and originates from the Southeast and continues throughout the 15th and “possibly” the 16th century. He also notes that [ɛ ~ ɐ ~ ɪ] + [ŋ] > *-ing* [ɪŋ] had already been recorded by all orthoepists and “was general” before 1500 in words such as ME *weng* and *fleng* which were raised to “wing” and “fling.” Considering the variation involving lax ME [ɪ], the reader should keep in mind that it had several possible allophones in the New England feature pool which included [ɪ ~ i ~ iː] and possibly [iːɪ] depending on the environment.

For the sake of simplicity, I indicate only one variant. Dobson also records *thread*, *wrest*, *wretch*, *rest* and *together* with [ɪ] (1968, 568). “Bench” and “stench” are given with [ɪ] by Levins (1570) and *quench* is recorded with [ɪ] by Cocker (1696) and Hawkins (1692).

As we have seen previously, Lowell spells “end” *eend* in his *Biglow Papers* suggesting [iːnd], the latter pronunciation being still current in the Southern Appalachians. Hall records both [ɪnd] and [iːnd] for the Smokies (1942, 21). Shorrocks (1998, 375) also records a similar pronunciation of *end* [iːnd] for Bolton, Lancashire. Indeed, Wright (1905, 422-423) gives [iːnd] not only for Lancashire but also Derbyshire, Bedfordshire, Essex and Kent as well as [iːn] for Devonshire and [ɪnd] for Yorkshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Suffolk and Sussex. Here again, this looks very much like direct continuity between English and American dialects.

Dwight also rhymes *friend* ~ *end* but, here too, one wonders whether he intended these to be pronounced [frɛnd] ~ [ɛnd], [fɪnd] ~ [ɪnd]. This demonstrates that the raising and lengthening of [ɛ] clearly an English dialectal trait that was carried over to the colonies during the early settlement period and that these pronunciations were active in the feature pool.

ME /ɛ/ > [ɪ] is abundantly documented in the early New England and New York records, which is another sign that this pronunciation was common throughout the colonies, both North and South, and part of the original feature pool. The Watertown records (Mass.) have *alphabitical* [ælfə'bitɪkəl] (1647), *gitt* [ɡɪt] for “get” (1648), *gineral* [ˈdʒɪnərəl] for “general” (1666), *middoes* [ˈmɪdɔz] for

meadows (1672). This same source also gives *against* [ə'gmst] for “against” (1672).

Gil (1619) and Cocker (1696) spell “yesterday” *isterday* with initial [ɪ] (or could it be [i-stæɪdæi]?). This may be a result of the assimilation of initial [i-] + [ɛ] > [i · ~ ɪ]. *Yes* and *yet* are also given as [ɪs] and [ɪt] by Gil (1619) (according to Dobson), or is it [is] and [it]? Newton (1660) also records “yet” as *it* showing that initial [j-] had not emerged in his Lincolnshire variety. Likewise, and for the same reason, J. Smith (1674) equates “yeast” with *is't* “is it” (Dobson, 1968, 568). This would imply that “yeast” was already pronounced [i(:)st] and that *is't* could also be pronounced with raised short [i]. The absence of the initial glide /j/ is still a feature of both Welsh and Welsh English as spoken by older speakers today (Parry, 1977, 1979, 1999). These are also common in Welsh English dialect literature (cf. Lewis Jones’ *Cwmardy* and *We Live*) in which “yes” is regularly rendered as *is*.

The persistence of such pronunciation into late 18th-century England is confirmed by Nares (1784, 21) who, writes that this short <e> “is also pronounced like i short, in *engine*, commonly, but not elegantly; always in *English*, *England*, *pretty*, *yes*, *yesterday*.”

The Groton records (Mass.) give *tribble* for “treble” (1669), *git* for “get” (1672), *ginnral* [ˈdʒɪnɹəl] (note the apocope) for “general” (1681), *hild* [hɪld] for “held” (1682), *ind* [ɪnd] for “end” (1685), *comminsment* [kəˈmɪnsmənt] for “commencement” (1692). *Intered* [ˈɪntɛɪd ~ ˈɪntʌɪd] for “entered” (< OF *entrer*) (1662) as well as *frinds* [fɹɪndz] for “friends” (1663) is noted once again (cf. Franklin and his uncle Benjamin the Elder both spell friend as *frind*, cf. below).

The Plymouth records (Mass.) include examples such as *rigements* [ˈɹɪdʒəmənts] for “regiments”, *rid oake* [ɹɪd ˈo:k] for “red oak,” *promises* [ˈpɹɪmɪsɪs] for “premises.” The Huntington records (NY) have *hild* [hɪld] for “held,” *instid* [ɪnˈstɪd] for “instead” (1663), *pibl* [ˈpɪbl] for “pebble” (1688). The Hempstead records (NY): *ourselves* [oʊɹˈsɪlvz], *fichte* [fɪtʃt] for “fetched” (1657). Compare *fichte* with *fach* [fætʃ] (1691) and Shorrocks’ [fɒtʃ] below. The Hempstead records also give *Gineral* [ˈdʒɪnɹəl] (1657), *Hinery* [ˈhɪnəri] for “Henry” (1657), *finse* [fɪns] for “fence” (1657) (cf. *fans* also in the Hempstead records, 1665), *lingthe* [lɪŋθ] for “length” (1657) (but also *lankth*, see below), *watermillion* for “watermelon” (1663). The pronunciation of “*watermillion*” with [ˈmɪljən], according to Krapp (1925, 99), survives in modern AAVE (but also in Dorset, cf. Gachelin, 1981, Burton, 2010) suggesting that the same pronunciation probably existed in 17th-century Virginia and that Africans adopted the pronunciation from English indentured servants. The New Haven records (Conn.) have *chist* for *chest* (1639) and *thridd* for *thread* (1656) (p. 98).

In a poem composed by Benjamin Franklin the Elder on July 15, 1710, he rhymes *frind* with *attend* suggesting that both words were pronounced [frɪnd] ~ [əˈtɪnd].

Keep a Good Conscience, 'tis [tɪz] a constant *Frind*;
Like Judge and Witness This Thy Acts *Attend*.

Later in the same poem, Franklin the Elder uses the traditional spelling, i.e. *friend*. An interesting detail is that “friend” was borrowed into Welsh as *ffrind* [frɪnd], the most obvious source being a West Midlands English variety sharing this raised [ɛ] > [ɪ].

We have also seen that, in his *Reformed Mode of Spelling*, Franklin gives *git* as the spelling of “get” (see examples below), so did he intend *forget* to be pronounced [fɒr'gɪt] or [fɒr'get]? The question is to know which pronunciation dominated, [ɛ] or [ɪ] in his own speech? As we might expect, there are plentiful examples of [ɛ] > [ɪ] in Lowell's *Biglow Papers* (1848). A full two hundred years after the redaction of the town records, we see the same pronunciations: *yit* [jɪt] “yet,” *git* [gɪt] “get,” *kittle* [kɪtl] “kettle,” *in'my* [ɪnmi] “enemy,” *agin* [ə'gɪn] “again,” *rigiment* [ˈɪdʒɪmɪnt] “regiment,” *gin'ral* [dʒɪnɪəl] “general,” *stiddier* [ˈstɪdiə(ɪ)] “steadier,” *messidge* [ˈmɛsɪdʒ] “message,” etc. These are yet more examples of continuity from the colonial period and, ultimately, from England.

Burton (2010, 26) cites Barnes' *kittle* for “kettle” in Dorset English when he speaks of the “interchangeability of short e and short i.” Shores (1984, 49) also gives *kittle* as a common pronunciation for “kettle” on Tangier Island in the Chesapeake Bay. Shorrocks (1998, 217) also gives many examples of this kind in contemporary Bolton English: *get* [gɪt], *feathers* [ˈfɪðəz], *let* [lɪt]/[li:t], *chemical* [ˈkɪmɪkl], *Indian* [ˈɪndʒən], *ever* [ɪvə(ɪ)], *never* [ˈnɪvə(ɪ)]... For Somerset, Alicia Leith, in her 1895 novel entitled *A Plant of Lemon Verbena*, which is written entirely in broad dialect, gives *Frinch zongs* for “French songs” and *pinnies* for “pennies,” showing it was common there too. Further corpus-based studies would be necessary to bear this out.

Finally, for the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee, Hall (1942, 19) also gives [ɪ] for [ɛ] in *pen* (confirming the famous *pin-pen* merger associated with southern US English), *anyway*, *friend*, *generally*, *genuine*, *Glen*, *Henry*, *regiment*, *hen*, *Jenkins*, *many*, *men*, *mend*, *penny*, *crevice*... all with [ɪ] or with breaking [ɪjən] in monosyllables.

The existence of [ɪ] in place of [ɛ] in all these sources demonstrates that, without any doubt, this trait was an element of the founder generation's feature pool inventory and would appear to have been common in all of the colonies. Franklin's 1768 transcriptions reveal that he also pronounced it this way and the pronunciation is still the rule in many varieties throughout the American South as far north as the Dayton area where it is universal even among well-educated speakers (German, personal notes, 2014).

3.1 The New England Poets

Here again, the New England poets show examples of this, but not as commonly as indicated above, which may suggest that by the end of the 18th century it was losing ground to [ɛ] in New England (but not in the South).

Since Dwight and Barlow write in the standard English spelling of the time, only in a few instances can we deduce that [ɛ] is actually pronounced [ɪ]. The overwhelming number of examples involve only one word: *heaven* which is rhymed systematically with *given*, *driven*, *striven* and *riven* or *even* (the latter, we can assume, was also pronounced [ɪvən]).⁸

Exactly the same kinds of pronunciations appear in some of Franklin's poems. For instance, in *Poor Richard's Almanack* (1736) we note:

Far on the right and left, th'extreams of *heav'n* [hɪvɪn],⁹
To frosts and snows and bitter blasts are *giv'n* [gɪvɪn].

In his 1748 issue of *Poor Richard's Almanack* we have several examples of *driven* ~ *heav'n*:

Where Planets in pure Streams of Ether *driven*,
Swim thro' the blue Expanse of *Heav'n*.

Nevertheless, considering our previous discussions in Chapter 16, [i·] is not to be entirely excluded here.

This is precisely the same kind of rhyme written on a multitude of occasions by Dwight and Barlow. "Given" and "heaven" are rhymed well over fifteen times by Dwight in *Greenfield Hill* but only three times by Barlow. On the other hand, Barlow rhymes "heaven" and "driven" eight times in his *Columbiad*. Here there can be little doubt that *heaven* is indeed pronounced [hɪvən ~ 'hi·vɪn].

This same treatment of <ea> can perhaps be seen in Franklin's "A Conversational Pleasantry" (also known as "He would please all"):

But as they jogg'd on they were laugh't and *hiss'd*,
What, two booby Lubbers on one sorry *Beast*! (1743)

Here again it is difficult to know whether *hiss'd* is pronounced [hɪst] or [hi·st], in which case *beast* would be pronounced [bɪst], [bi·st], [bi·st]. If Suffolk-type lowering of ME /i/ > [ɛ] is imagined, it would give [hɛst] ~ [bɛ·st]. This is unlikely because Franklin does not lower [ɪ ~ i·] to [ɛ].

Finally, in the preceding section, we cited Dwight's (*Greenfield Hill*) rhyme

8 The opposite analysis cannot be fully excluded either, i.e., that *given* and *driven* are pronounced with [ɛ], but this is unlikely in the present context.

9 Recall Hark's transcription of *heaven* as "héven" in his transcription of the "Lord's Prayer" (1564) which may signal the presence of a high-mid /e/, which is easily confused with /ɪ/.

of *queen* ~ *men* noting that Burton (2010) transcribes Barnes' pronunciation of *men* as [mɛn] for Dorset. We saw that Ellis reinterpreted this as [mɪn]. Note that Dobson's observation that Hodges, a Londoner, equated ME short /i/ with French é, that is high-mid [ɛ], like Burton. Note also that Dwight matches *agen* ~ *sin*.

His heart by nature prone to sin,
Agen he wounds you, and agen;

Interpreted literally, this would imply that *agen* is pronounced as it is written, [ə'gen]. In this case, is *sin* pronounced [sɪn ~ si-n] or is it lowered here to [sɛn]? Either realization is possible according to the town records. In Lowell's Massachusetts vernacular, "again" is spelt *agin* [ə'gin] on multiple occasions. As indicated above, the Watertown records (Mass.) have *agin*st [ə'ginst] for "against" (1672).

As I have stressed on several occasions, it is entirely possible that Franklin and his fellow New England poets were juggling with various competing pronunciations and fitting them to their rhymes wherever they felt this was appropriate or, at least, acceptable. This meant, on occasion, stretching or reducing the vowel or modifying its quality as they saw fit.

4. Lowering of ME [ɛ(:)] > [æ(:)]

We have now recorded the lowering of [ɪ] > [ɛ] (Chapter 16) as well as the raising of [ɛ] > [ɪ]. Lowering also occurs in other specific environments, namely, [ɛ] > [æ] in words like *wrestling* and *wrestling* ['ɹæslɪŋ] which is also common in the American vernaculars today. For instance, the Plymouth records have "Wrestling Brewster" spelt *Wrastling Bruster*... Cobb (1821, 168-172, cited in Krapp (1925, 93), proposes *rassle* as the "correct" pronunciation of "wrestle" but, on the contrary, prefers *redish* for "radish" and *gether* for "gather." Note this discrepancy in RP and GA in *to gather* but *together* ([æ] > [ɛ] below). We see that Franklin's rhymes also play on this discrepancy. Shorrocks (1998, 235) has ['ɹɔsl] for "wrestle" (Bolton [ɔ] in *land*, *stand*, *hand* etc. corresponding to GA/RP /æ/). The doublets, *thrash* and *thresh* bear witness to this kind of alternation which have emerged in standard English with different meanings.

Krapp (1925, 92) writes that the older American pronunciation of *wreck* was [ɹæk], preserved in the expression "rack and ruin", and was eventually replaced by [ɹɛk] as a result of schooling. He cites Sheridan as giving [ɹæk] as the only pronunciation of "wreck" while Walker proposes only [ɹɛk]. The Connecticut poet, David Hitchcock (1773-1849), rhymes *back* and *attack* with *wreck* [ɹæk] but here one wonders whether this might reflect a tendency among New Englanders to raise [æ] > [ɛ] which was clearly a feature of Franklin's spoken English that also comes through in his RMS (cf. Chapter 26).

Among the examples in this class of word is [kætʃ] ~ [ketʃ] for “to catch,” both variants which have survived to this day and are pronunciations which many speakers alternate unconsciously. These are discussed by 18th-century orthoepists. The poet Trumbull rhymes *fetching* ~ *catching* (cf. Krapp, 1925, 92). Both words, however, could be interpreted as having either [ˈfætʃɪn] ~ [kætʃɪn] or [ˈfetʃɪn] ~ [ketʃɪn]. We have already seen that the Hempstead records (NY) have *fichte* for “fetch” (1657) while Groton records (Mass.) have *fach* (1691), showing two opposite tendencies: ME /ɛ/ > /i/ (i.e. [ɪ]) and ME /ɛ/ > /æ/. Both were part of the 17th-century New England feature pool.

All of these examples suggest that pronunciations with [ɛ] > [æ] were not at all infrequent and Hall (1942, 20) gives numerous examples of [ɛ] > [æ] in the Smokies which, as we have already seen, conserves a number of relic pronunciations. The *hem* (of a skirt) is pronounced [hæm], *regular* [ˈɹæglə] , *peg* [pæɡ], *keg* [kæɡ], *leg* [læɡ], *flesh* [flæʃ] and *fleshy* [flæʃi], *measure* [ˈmæʒə], *pleasure* [plæʒə], *mellow* [ˈmælə] and *yellow* [ˈjælə].

Similarly, in their analyses of William Barnes’ poems, Burton (2010, 54) notes *bag* for “beg,” *bagger* for “begger,” *kag* for “keg,” *agg* for “egg,” *lag* for “leg” while Gachelin (1981, 537-538) has *drash* for “dresh” (thresh), *drashel* for “threshold,” *langth* for “length” (cf. *strangth* for “strength,” *stratch* for “stretch” and *yaller* and *yoller* for “yellow”). Again, the variety is striking with “length” given as *lingthe* (1657) and *lankth* (1661) in the Hempstead records (NY). More on *lankth* below. These are strong arguments suggesting that the [æ] hypothesis must not be rejected outright as an option in the New England town records.

Likewise, for “yellow,” the SED (Orton & Deith, 1970, 395) gives [ˈjalə] or [ˈjələ] for *yellow* at points in Derby, Cheshire, Monmouth, Gloucester and [ˈjælə] in Worcestershire (Wo). The latter is common in modern southern US varieties in particular. Dobson (1968, 566) adds that *yellow* shows ME unrounding of the short o (i.e., from [ɒ]) to short <a> [æ]. Grandgent (1899, 238) also gives [æ] for *yellow* in New England. This shows that this feature extended throughout the colonies and, once again, must have figured in the founder generation “feature pool.” This suggests that all of these features stemmed from English vernaculars during the colonial period.

Shorrocks (1998, 229-230) gives lowered examples such as “heard” [jæ:(ɹ)d], “year” [jæ:(ɹ)], but also centralized [jə:] (ibid., 230), often with r-loss. He also records “earhole” [ˈja,ɹo:l] and “learn” [læ:(ɹ)n] (ibid., 189). I have recorded [læ:(ɹ)nt] “learned” at Deane, near Bolton, Lancs. (German, personal notes). In his *Reformed Mode of Spelling*, Franklin also transcribed *unlearned* as *unlarnd* [ənˈlærnd], probably another slip revealing his natural Boston pronunciation. All these examples indicate the lowering of [ɛ:(ɹ)] > [æ:] was relatively frequent, possibly with compensatory lengthening in the case of r-loss or r-weakening. Quoting Dearborn’s *The Columbian Grammar* (1795), Grandgent (1899, 238) also

gives *larnin* as a “mispropriety” common in New England. However, in his lecture to the Philadelphia Philosophical Society (founded by Franklin, cf. Chapter 3), the Franco-American linguist, Pierre-Etienne Duponceau (1818) (1760-1844) gives *learn* as a key word having his “Arpeth” vowel, i.e., [æ] thus demonstrating that it was still current and presumably an accepted pronunciation in early 19th-century America. His talk was given at the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, founded by Franklin in 1743. His audience must have been sensitive to the fact that this pronunciation was also common in Pennsylvania.

A number of spellings involving words spelt <a + C(C)> or <a + C + e> in the New England town records suggest, yet again, a rather ambiguous set of pronunciations. The question is whether they represent [ɛ(:)] or [æ(:)]. I have cited a significant number of words from the Massachusetts the records (Orbeck, 1927, 34-35). In the Plymouth records, for instance, one encounters spellings as “*brach of law* for “breach of law” which, in Chapter 17, I preferred to interpret as [ˈbɹɛ(:)tʃ əv ˈlɑ:], while I gave [bræ(:)tʃ əv ˈlɑ:] as a secondary possibility. If it is the former, it may simply be inspired by the pronunciation of the first letter of the alphabet <a> which was normally pronounced [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] at the time. Given Hall’s examples above, however, it cannot be excluded that the New England and New York data also represent cases with [æ(:)].

Likewise, the Groton records (Mass.) give *prach* for “preach” [pɹɛ(:)tʃ ~ pɹæ(:)tʃ?] (1691) (cf. Krapp, 1925). Two examples of “deacon” are given in this same source: *dackins sate* [ˈdɛ(:)kɪns sɛ:t ~ ˈdæ:kɪns? ˈsɛ:t] “deacon’s seat” (1683) and *dackn* [ˈdɛ(:)kɪ ~ ˈdæ(:)kɪ?] (1684) where the <ck> cluster combined with final syllabic [ŋ] suggests shortening of the stressed vowel. Likewise, *spak* is given for “speak” and could represent shortened [spɛk] or [spæk?] (1698). Finally, the Dedham records have *whate* [hwɛ(:)t ~ (h)uɛ:t]¹⁰ for “wheat” (1678) while the Groton records give *what*, probably [hwɛ(:)t ~ (h)wæ:t?] (1684, 1685). If the vowel was long, I would venture to say that the pronunciation wavered between [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] in all of the above words. The normal evolution of “wheat” would thus have been [hwɛ:t] > [hwɛ:t] > [hwɛ:t] > [hwi:t]. As stated previously, orthographic <a> on some of these words may simply have been pronounced [ɛ:]/[ɛ:] but, as we shall see in Chapter 26, it appears as though Franklin pronounced the letter <a> as [æ(:)] as well.

Furthermore, by virtue of the spelling <a + C + e>, *sate* for “seat”, <a> is probably pronounced with [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] but [ɛ:] cannot be ruled out. Likewise, we have *sased* [sɛ:zd ~ sɛ:zd] for “seized” (1684) and *plase* [plɛ:z ~ plɛ:z] for “please” (1685). Wright (1905, 586) gives [sɛ:t] for large areas of Scotland but, also for Staffordshire, Northamptonshire, Shropshire, Oxfordshire, Wiltshire

10 Note that in all of these examples I have not given the vocalic value of <w> as described by Franklin (1779) and Webster (1789).

and Somerset. Note, however, Hall's [ˈplæʒə] above and Shorrocks' transcription of "please" below in contemporary Lancashire dialect as [ple:z]. Two further examples from these records are *pase* [pɛ:s ~ pɛ:s] for "peace" (1681) and, in the Easthampton records (NY), *complately* [ˌkɒmˈplɛ:tli ~ ˌkɒmˈplɛ:tli] (1653) for "completely." In each of these examples, [ɛ:] would eventually have shifted to the high-mid allophone [e:] hastening the passage to [i:]. One can thus assume that such pronunciations were common among Franklin's own family members and this helps us judge what his pronunciations of such words as *complete*, etc. may have been. Indeed, we have seen in the section on ME /ɛ:/ that Franklin probably pronounced it [kɒmˈplɛ:t]. Again, Miège presents the vowel as high-mid [ɛ:] in the 1680s, twenty years before Franklin's birth.

The Groton records (Mass.) also include *resaiued* [rɛ'seivd ~ rɛ'sæivd] for "received" (1683) the latter, with the <i>, may suggest an archaic but formerly prestigious B2 pronunciation with [æi]. Orbeck (1927) also signals that *Wait* was still pronounced [ei] in New England and this realization may have been confused with *Price* words which he believed was still pronounced [ɛi] (alongside [əi]). Dobson (1968, 771) writes that "Sir Thomas Smith attempted arbitrary distinction between <ai> and <ei> words" and that this "is based in real variation between more conservative pronunciation [ai] (which he admits some people used even in ei words) and the more advanced [ɛi]." This shows that [æi] and [ɛi] pronunciations were in competition in the late 16th century. Very possibly this [æi] realization could have lingered on until the 17th and even 18th centuries, in both England and colonial America. Indeed, we have already seen that the SED has recorded [æi] has been attested today in various parts of England (Dorset, Norfolk, etc.). This could justify the some of the transcriptions with [æi] noted in Chapter 17 (i.e. for "received," "receipt," etc.).

The Groton records (Mass.) also include other French borrowings such as *rasin* [ˈrɛ:zm]) (OF *reison*, 1200) for "reason" (1682), *sason* [ˈsɛ:zən] (OF *seysoun*, *seysyn*, *seison*, 1300) for "season," 1682), *spashie* [ˈspɛ:ʃi] (Lat *species*) for "specie" (1685), *dasant* [ˈdɛ:sənt] for "decent" (OF *décent*) (1682), *lagully* [ˈlɛ:gəli] for "legally" (OF *légal* 1447) (1683) and, finally, *sats* [sɛ(:)ts]? for "seats" (1683). Considering the Appalachian and Dorset examples, one cannot completely rule out that some of these words were pronounced with [æ:]. For this reason, I have included the [æ:] variants in the following examples, even they may be doubtful.

The Groton records (Mass.) give another series of <a> spellings: *salackt* [səˈlɛkt ~ səlɛkt] for "select" [1682), *whather* [ˈhwɛðə ~ ˈhwæðə?] for "whether" (compare with *whate* [hwɛ:t ~ hwæ:t?] for "wheat" above), *atand* [əˈtænd ~ ətænd?] (consider Franklin the Elder's [aˈtɪnd], rhymed with *frind*) for "attend", *wast* [west ~ wæst?] for "west" (1682), *panc* [pens ~ pæns?] for "pence" (1685), *matt* [mɛt ~ mæt?] for "met" (1691), *fach* [fɛtʃ ~ fætʃ] for "fetch" (1691) (cf. *fichte* above, 1657, Shorrocks (1998, 235) [fɒtʃ] for "fetch"). More examples from the

Groton records are *cradit* ['kɪədɪt ~ 'kɪædɪt?] for “credit” (1692), *capt* [kɛpt ~ kæpt?] for “kept” (1705), *rackun* ['ɪɛkən ~ 'ɪækən?] for “reckon” (1704), *salf* [sɛlf ~ sælf?] for “self” (1705), *satel* ['setəl ~ 'sætəl?] for “settle” (1705). The possibility for all of these words to be pronounced with an open [ɛ ~ æ] is increased if one considers Hall’s Smokies example [fætʃ] for “fetch” (1942, 21). Note that Wright (1905, 435-436) also gives [fætʃ] as the pronunciation for Shropshire and [fatʃ] for Cheshire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire.

The Hempstead records (NY) also has *fance* [fɛns ~ fæns?] for “fence” (but note *finse* [fɪns] above, 1657, also in the Hempstead records!), *nack* [nɛk ~ næk?] for “neck” (cf. Hall, 1942 above), *mande* [mɛnd ~ mænd?] for “mend,” *manched* ['mɛnfænd ~ 'mænfænd?] for “mentioned,” *panlty* ['pɛnʔti ~ 'pænʔti?] for “penalty,” all for the year 1665. These same records also offer the following example: the *lankth and brath* (1661) for “length and breadth” which could be interpreted as [læŋkθ ænd 'bræ:(t)θ].

If there were any doubts about the lowering of ME /ɛ:/ to [æ:], note that Wright (1905, 349) records [bɪædθ] for Norfolk, Suffolk, [bɪadθ] for Dorset and [bratθ] for Derbyshire. Again, as indicated above, the Hempstead records (NY) also give *lingthe* [lɪŋθ] for “length” (1657) which corresponds to east Somerset [lɪŋkθ] given by Wright (*ibid.*, 510). The first transcription of “length,” i.e. *lankth* (1661) (Hempstead records), corresponds to the pronunciation given by Wright for Dorset [læŋθ] (cf. Gachelin’s *length* for Dorset above), Kent [læŋθ] east Suffolk and Norfolk [læŋkθ], which is precisely the spelling of the (second) Hempstead scrivener. Note also that the velar plosive post-nasal [g] in *lankth* undergoes protraction here in contact with voiceless [θ] ([ŋg] + [θ] > [ŋkθ]).

Hall (1942, 102) observes that, through regressive assimilation, [ŋθ] can also be pronounced [nθ] in the Smokies. All these tendencies were doubtless part of the colonial feature pool as they still are in varieties of English today. This, of course, is still a common pronunciation in southern US English (cf. also [ɪ] > [æ] before nasals below): [læ(:)ŋkθ] and also in words such as *sing*, *wing*, *thing* all pronounced with [ɛŋ], [ɛŋ] and, very frequently, [æŋ ~ æ:ŋ] (cf. [ɪŋ], [ɪŋ] in these words above). Shorrocks too gives examples such as [stɪɛŋ] for “string” showing that [ɪŋ] and [ɛŋ] are shared by both American and English dialects, a fact which results from a shared phonological history.

4.1 ME /ɛr/ > [ɛɪ ~ æɪ]

Dobson (1968, 558-559) shows that ME *er* [ɛɪ] had already moved to [æɪ ~ aɪ] during the early 14th century, first in the North of England and, around the end of that century, in areas of the South. ME *werre* [wɛr] for “war,” *fere* [fɛɪ] for “far,” *ster* [stɛɪ] for “star,” *derk* [dɛɪk] for “dark” all followed this path: [ɛɪ] > [æɪ] > [aɪ] > [ʊɪ] with variable vowel lengths. Dobson (*ibid.*) believes this

lowering to [æɪ] was associated with uneducated London English and that it was in common use as early as the 15th century. He notes that *heart* (OE *heorte*) was recorded with short a [a ~ æ] by “all sixteenth- and seventeenth century orthoepists from Willam Salesbury onward.” In the 17th-century Dedham town records of Massachusetts (early church history), I counted ten examples of “heart” spelt *hart* and realized as [hæɪt] or possibly [ha:ɪt] under the influence of South-Easterners. It is pronounced [ha:t] in the traditional Massachusetts vernacular.

Note also that Dobson (1968, 404-405) admits the difficulty of interpreting the precise value of strings of Wharton’s pairings of *heard* ~ *hard* ~ *herd* (1654), writing that it is “impossible to decide whether all three words have [ar] or whether *heard* varies between er and ar.” It would appear that his latter proposal is the correct one. Given their proximity, fluctuation between [ɛ:ɪ ~ æ:ɪ] was obviously common.

As mentioned above, Wells (1989, 385) has shown that West Countrymen and South-Westerners still have [a] rather than [æ] today (except in Bristol and Southampton which have [æ]), however, and this should be kept in mind for New England given that this tendency is not recent and this was probably a characteristic of the speech of the southwestern settlers in Massachusetts. In short, it was certainly part of the New England feature pool. For this reason, I take this short ME /a/ to have had the value of [æ(:)ɪ ~ a(:)ɪ] in this region. It appears, however, that [æ(:)ɪ] realizations may have even been viewed as more prestigious (cf. Chapter 26).

In New England, I am assuming that the majority pronunciation during the 18th century among the “vulgar” was quickly evolving towards r-lessness (despite Grandgent’s statement that r-loss became common around the mid-19th century). A word such as *hat* would have been pronounced [hæ·t] while *hart* was pronounced [hæɪt ~ hæ:t ~ haɪt ~ ha:t]. In contemporary eastern Massachusetts, for instance, it is still pronounced as a low unrounded [a:] in words such as *heart* [ha:t], *heark* [ha:k], *hearth* [ha:θ] or in the collocation, “sweetheart” [ˈswiːdaːʔ], all with r-loss (German, New Bedford, Mass., personal notes). This [aɪ] conserves the lowered EME [æ:] > [a:] before [ɪ]. All indications are that Franklin pronounced all these words with [æ(:)ɪ] (perhaps Philadelphia influence or posh Londoners who favoured [æɪ] pronunciations). In the 17th-century Dedham town records of Massachusetts (early church history), I counted ten examples of “heart” spelt *hart* realized as [hæɪt] or possibly [ha:ɪt].

Dobson (1968, 559) cites Gil (1619), Price (1668) and Cocker (1696) who pronounce *hearth* [hɛɪθ] while Hodges (1649), Coles (1674) and Cooper (1685) pronounce it [haɪθ ~ hæɪθ]. Hart (1551/1569) gives both *hark* [æɪ] (< ME *herkien*) and *hearken* [ɛɪ] (< ME *herkenen*) while *earth* is [ɛɪ] which is still the pronunciation in Scots (cf. Lowell below).

Yard (< OE *geard*) and “farm” (OF *ferm*), formerly with [ɛɪ] as can be seen in the Dedham records (Mass.) as *fearm* [fɛɪm] for “farm” (1648)¹¹ while the Plymouth records have *farm* (17th c.), possibly pronounced [fæ(ɪ)m] or [fa:(ɪ)m]. Today the traditional New England pronunciation is [fa:m]. Wright (1905, 429) has [fæ:m] for southwest Lancashire.

Other treatments are possible, with <ear> rising to [i:ɪ ~ iə] in many American varieties today (GA [ɪɪ] / RP [iə]). A frequent spelling of “near” encountered is *neer* [ni:ɪ] (Krapp, 1925, 171) but the Hempstead records (NY) give not only *nare* [nɛ:ɪ] (1665) but also *nar* in the phrase *the nar ear* and *fur eare* (1686) [ðə 'næɪ, ɛ:ɪ] and [fəɪ, ɛ:ɪ] for “the near ear” and “the far ear.” In the first case, *nar* for “near” represents a lowering of [ɛ] > [æ(:) ~ a(:)] whereas *fur* for “far” shows centralization to [fəɪ], a pronunciation once common in New England and now associated with the American South and Southwest.¹²

In his *Reformed Mode of Spelling*, Franklin transcribes “far” as [fæɪ]. Nonetheless, Krapp (ibid.) suggests that in this example, *nar* had already been lowered to [næɪ]. Wright does indeed give [næɪ] for Cumbria, Lancashire, Cheshire and Derbyshire alongside [nɪə(ɪ)] and [næɪ] for parts of Scotland, so Krapp’s opinion cannot be discounted although he gives no relevant pronunciations for eastern England.¹³

These [næ:ɪ ~ nɑ:ɪ ~ nɒ:ɪ ~ nɑ:ɪ] pronunciations thus appear to have co-existed alongside [nɛ:ɪ] and [ni:ɪ] pronunciations. The former realizations are still extremely common in traditional Appalachian speech today in <ere>, <ear>, <are> and <air> words, such as *there* and *bear*, etc. being lowered to [æɪ ~ aɪ ~ ɑɪ] (cf. below Duponceau (1818, 253)). These observations are supported by Krapp (1925, 109) who writes:

Many of the rimes of the New England poets indicate not only that modern [ɛ:] was pronounced as [æ:], the preliminary stage to what later became Southern and Northern dialectal [ɑ:] in *there*,¹⁴ *bear*, *bare*, etc., but that even some words which

11 This pronunciation with [ɛ] may be a relic of the original OF pronunciation [ferm]. In early French, <r> was apico-alveolar [r] and not uvular [ʁ]. The latter was introduced around the 17th century but has not yet entirely supplanted the older pronunciation.

12 Arriving from France as a child, I lived in Massachusetts until the age of fourteen. I vividly recall my 6th grade teacher, Mrs. Thomas of Mattapoisett, Mass., telling me that, when she was young, the older people used to commonly say “a fur piece” as in “a fur piece down the road” which, with hindsight, I believe was pronounced [ə, fə: 'pi:s] meaning “a good distance” (cf. OF *une bone piece de chemin*). She was close to retirement at the time which puts her birth at around 1900. Like many Massachusettsans, she claimed direct decent from the first Puritan settlers.

13 In southern Finistère in Breton-speaking Brittany, in the parish of Forest-Fouesnant people regularly pronounce words such as *rêr*, meaning “rear,” as [ræ:r ~ ra:r] whereas a 9 km to the north in Sant Yvi, it is pronounced [rɛ:r] (*revr* in literary Breton). Little notice is given to this difference between speakers of the two subvarieties it may have been similar among English dialect speakers.

14 As a boy in the early 1960s, I clearly recall older inhabitants of New Bedford and Fairhaven, Massachusetts, imitating the call of the 19th-century whalers who, upon the sight of a whale

have [i:] in present English, for example, *ear*, *year*, were formerly pronounced with a very open vowel, [ɛ:] or [æ:].

Based on evidence from Cooper, Dobson (1968) argues that, after 1650, a few years before the birth of Franklin's father Josiah, the normal pronunciation of words such as *there*, *where*, *were*, *bear*, *swear*... was [ɛ:ɪ]. From the evidence at our disposal, I believe that [æ:ɪ] and [ɛ:ɪ] variants remained in competition in various regions of North America and Britain until the present day.

The Hempstead records (NY) give *yaere* for "year," perhaps representing [jɛ:ɪ] or even [jæ:ɪ] (1665) and *aire* [ɛ:ɪ] for "ear" (1665). There are other interesting spellings of "ear(s)," also from the Hempstead records, such as *aears*, possibly pronounced [ʔæɪz ~ ɛ-əɪz] (1665). In the following examples, the presence of the intervocalic palatal glide <y>, *ayer* [ʔæjə ~ ʔejə] (1666) and *eyer* [ʔejə ~ ʔejə] (1695) reinforces my hypothesis that "breaking" may have already been a characteristic of early New York English during the earliest period of colonization. If so, breaking may have been a pronunciation that existed in rural England, even if it was a peripheral pronunciation at the time. We have seen that the origin of breaking appears to result from the lengthening of formerly short vowels in 17th-century English varieties.

In New England, the pronunciation of spellings in <ar>, <are> must have varied between [æ:ɪ ~ a:ɪ] and, with r-loss, [æ: ~ a:]. Borrowed from Old French *person*, i.e. "parson," is given in the Watertown Records (Mass.) as *passen* (1649) as well as *passam* and *passon* clearly showing the early elision of [r] in the speech of this particular scrivener and which I interpret as [ʔæ:sən] or [ʔa:sən]. The latter transcription is precisely the pronunciation of modern conservative Massachusetts speech today.¹⁵ As I noted in the introduction to this book, I have chosen to include /r/ in nearly all my examples with the full knowledge that it, when occurring post-vocally, it can be elided in New England (and in RP, as well as in large areas of contemporary England).

In some cases, the vacillation between [ɛɪ] and [æɪ] pronunciations discussed previously may have been encouraged by the fact that Old French also shared the same instability with dual pronunciations such as *merchaunt* ~ *marchaunt* and *mercy* ~ *marcy*, a tendency which has persisted in French and Québécois dialects. These may thus have been borrowed into English with both <ar> and <er> [ɛr] pronunciations and contributed to this early (but natural) tendency in English. Dobson (1968, 561) makes a similar point. For instance, the Plymouth

spewing brine, would cry out from the crows-nest (top of the mainmast), "Thar she blows!" [ʔɑ:ɪ fɪ 'blouz] (with lowered [ɑɪ], however).

15 "Parson," late 13th century, *person* (late 12th century as a surname), "parish priest" (later often applied to a clergyman in general), from Anglo-French and Old French *persone* "a curate, parson, holder of a church office." Breton also borrowed the same word from French at an early date. It is still pronounced [ʔpersən ~ ʔpersɪ].

records give both *merchant* ['mɛ.ɪtʃənt] as well as *merchantable* ['mæ.ɪtʃəntəbəl] for “merchant” and “merchantable.” Recall Webster’s condemnation of both the *murcy* and *marcy* pronunciations in his *Dissertation* (1789, 105) and preference for [mɛ.ɪsi].

Duponceau describes the difference between [ɛ] and [æ] as follows:

There is a real difference between the two sounds which I call Arpeth and Airish, though some have confounded them together as if they were the same. A Frenchman will hardly be persuaded that they are different sounds, he will call Airish an “e ouvert” and Arpeth an “e plus ouvert.” (Duponceau, 1818, 253)

Duponceau criticizes Sheridan and Walker’s transcriptions of *merchant*, complaining that Sheridan proposes *martshant* while Walker proposes *mertshant*. “Neither of these writers seems to be aware that the only difference between these modes of pronunciation is in the quantity given to the vowel e, and not in the sound that it receives. Those who follow Sheridan, lengthen the sound of the first vowel, and the disciples of Walker make it short” (ibid., 253).

This distinction he is making is not quite evident, but he seems to be saying:

- a. *Airish* is [ɛ(:)] and *Arpeth* [æ(:)] are, to a French ear, allophones of the same /ɛ/ phoneme.
- b. The only real difference between them is one of vowel length [æ:ɪ] for Sheridan and short [ɛɪ] for Walker.

Earlier in his article, he writes:

I consider the sound of i in these and all other similar words (i.e. *fir*; *sir*; *third*...) to be that of arpeth, pronounced short (i.e. [æ]). To prove it, I take, for instance, the word *bird*, in which I find the sound of the i to be the same with that of a in *bard*, except that the first is short and the last is long. (Duponceau, 1818, 252)

This is interesting at two levels. First it confirms that *bird* and *bard* were minimal pairs and that *bard* was still pronounced [bæ:ɪd] in 1818, at least in Philadelphia, while *bird* was pronounced [bæɪd]. It thus explains how a word like “girl” evolved from [gɛɪl] > [gæɪl] giving *gal* [gæ:l] with r-loss in contemporary American English.

Furthermore, he goes on to add that the “Virginians in almost every case employ the sound of Arpeth [æ] instead of Airish [ɛ], as in *there*, *where stairs*, which they pronounce as if they were written *thahr*, *whahr*, *stahrs*” (Duponceau, 1818, 253). It would thus appear as though pronunciations such as [ðɛɪ] and [ðæɪ] for “there” were in free variation during the colonial period, both pronunciations appear to have been shared by Franklin. Franklin actually offers three transcriptions of “there” in his RMS, *ðer*, *ðeer* and *ðaer*, that seem to represent [ðɛ(:)ɪ] and [ðæ:ɪ] respectively.

Duponceau’s observations also explain the following spellings given in the

Groton records (Mass.): *detarmin* [dɛ'tærmɪn] for “determine” (1664), *sargin* [ˈsærdʒɪn] for “sergeant” 1681, but with centralized *confurmed* [kɒn'fəʊrmd] (1682) as well as *confarmed* [kɒn'fæʊrmd] for “confirmed” (1683). *Clark* [klæ.ɪk] is given for “clerk” (1662), *parsin* [ˈpærsɪn] for “person” (1683), *hard* [hæ.ɪd] for “herd” 1682, *sartify* [ˈsæ.ɪtɪfəɪ] (1683) and so on.

The Hempstead records (NY) give *thard* [θæ.ɪd] for “third” (1664), but also *parsun* [ˈpærsən] for “person” (1660), and *heard* [hæ.ɪd] for “herd”, *taremes* [tæ.ɪmz], with an epenthetic vowel, for “terms” (1660). (See the passage of ME *ir* > [ɛ.ɪ] > [ɛ.ɪ] > [æ.ɪ] above) *parsun* [ˈpærsən] for “person” (1660).)

Once again, the *Biglow Papers* (1848) give numerous late examples of this kind although, by 1848, <ar> may have been lowered before /r/ to [a(:).ɪ] as in *stem to starn* [sta.ɪn ~ stæ.ɪn] for “stern” where GA has centralized [stən]. Other examples are *sarpints* [sa(ɪ)pɪnts ~ ˈsæ(ɪ)pɪnts] “serpents,” *varmin* [ˈva(ɪ)mɪn ~ ˈvæ(ɪ)mɪn] “vermin.” The latter is still heard in Appalachia and written as “varmint” [ˈvɔ.ɪmɪnt], meaning a troublesome wild animal (hence a “varmint rifle”). Other examples from the *Biglow Papers* are *desarve* [deˈza.ɪv ~ deˈzæ.ɪv] “deserve,” *sartin* [saɪtɪn ~ sæ.ɪtɪn] “certain,” *convartin* [kənˈvaɪtɪn ~ kənˈvæ.ɪtɪn] “converting,” *consarnin* [kənˈsaɪnɪn ~ kənˈsæ.ɪnɪn], *consarn* [kənˈsaɪn ~ kənˈsæ.ɪn] “concern,” *warn't* [waɪnt ~ wæ.ɪnt] “weren't,” *barthright* [ˈbɑ.ɪθ.ɹaɪt ~ ˈbæ.ɪθ.ɹaɪt] “birthright,” *larn* [laɪn ~ læ.ɪn] “learn,” *marcy* [maɪsi ~ mæ.ɪsi] “mercy,” *marciful* [ˈmaɪsɪfəl ~ ˈmæ.ɪsɪfəl] “merciful,” *thair* [ðɛ.ɪ] ([ðɑ.ɪ] for some) for “there.” With the exception of “there,” nearly all of these have been centralized to r-less [ɜ: ~ ə:] in traditional Massachusetts speech.

In conclusion, Lowell also spells “ear” as *air*, demonstrating that it was still pronounced [ɛ:ɪ ~ æ:ɪ] in Massachusetts in the middle of the 19th century. This was also a common pronunciation in Franklin’s day. Lowell gives similar words such as *airly* [ˈɛ:(ɪ)li] for “early” and *airth* [ɛ.ɪθ] “earth” but also *air* [ɛ:ɪ] for “are.” As we have already mentioned, Franklin transcribes “are” in his reformed alphabet as *er* [ɛɪ] and *eer* [ɛ:ɪ]. But, as we shall see, this is also a trait of eastern England, first recorded in the late Middle Ages.

Similarly, Burton points out that, in Barnes’ poetry, <er> and <ear> words, such as *certain*, *earn*, *earnest*, *German*, *herb* [ja:ɪb], *yearn*, *learn*, *serve*, *search*, *serpent* and *deserve*, are pronounced [a:ɪ]. He adds that “Barnes regarded / ə:ɪ/ to be an acceptable alternative” (Burton, 2010, 69). Alicia Leith (Somerset), in her 1895 novel, writes “We’d *zarve* out the ceakes...” (p. 65). For *ceakes*, see the treatment of voiceless velar plosive [kj- ~ kɛ-] by Walker (Chapters 23 and 27, Consonants) and Franklin’s criticism of the New England and New Jersey pronunciation of *keow* “cow” (cf. Chapters 11, 12 and 14).

Comparable pronunciations are recorded for other areas of England with Shorrocks (1998: 189) recording similar examples of orthographic <er> as [æ(:).ɪ] [sæ:(ɪ)v] for *serve*, but also [sə:v], a centralized pronunciation close to [sɜ:v ~ sə:v], perhaps reinforced under RP influence. He also has *sermon* pronounced

as [ˈsæ:(ɪ)mən] and [læ:(ɪ)n] for *learn*, just as in New England.

4.2 /ɛɪ ~ æɪ/ > [əɪ]: The Drift towards Centralization

Just above, we saw the example of *clerk* being pronounced both [klæɪk] in the Groton records (1662) and *clack* [kla:k ~ klæ:k] with r-lessness (Groton, 1703) while an alternate pronunciation co-existed with it [kleɪk] (< OF *clerc* [kler]). The modern GA pronunciation is [klæk] whereas the RP pronunciation is [kla:k] for which lowering and r-loss have become the rule. In GA this pronunciation has only been preserved in the “Clark” [klaɪk] family name. Note that in modern Lancashire English, Shorrocks (1998, 211) transcribes *Derby*, *Derbyshire* and *clerk* with the centralized pronunciations [ə:(ɪ)], a pronunciation normally associated with American English [ˈdæbi], [ˈdæbiʃaɪə] and [klæk]. These kinds of parallels between Modern English dialects and American English tend to go unnoticed, as the focus tends to be exclusively on RP and GA.

The 17th-century Groton records (Mass.) give an interesting array of realizations, showing three competing variants. The first example concerns three pronunciations of the same place name that must have existed contemporaneously at the community level during the late 17th century. For instance, *Gersham* is spelt variously as *Gershōm* [gɛʃəm], *Garsham* [gæʃəm] (all in 1693), and, with centralization, *Gurshom* [gəʃəm] (quoted in Krapp, 1925, 170). Also note vocalic reduction of *-ham* in unstressed syllables represented as <hom>, presumably as [həm]. These spellings seem to show the same pattern of evolution described above for *girl*: ME [gɪɪl] > EME [gɛɪl] > [gæɪl] (hence informal vernacular American “gal” [gæ:l]) and, finally in GA, [gəl].

Duchet and Trapoteau (“Change from Above and Resistance to Change,” 2019, 331) offer the following sociolinguistic reading of centring for late 18th-century London:

The distinction between *mercy* and *murcy* in Walker’s transcription amounts to a difference between [mɛɪ] and [mɜɪ], which shows that the speakers “above the vulgar,” while avoiding the lower-class variant [aɪ] in *mercy*, were the leaders of another sound change, i.e., the merger of /ɛ:/ (spelt <er>) and /ɜ:/ (spelt <ur>). In more than one respect this is a change from above combining the phasing out of the /aɪ/ and resistance to the merger of /ɛɪ/ and /ɜɪ/.

These authors thus assert that the prestige form for London speakers was [ˈmɛ.ɪsi] followed by [ˈmɜ.ɪsi], the centralized pronunciation and, at the bottom of the list, [ˈmæ.ɪsi], the “vulgar” pronunciation.

Webster also clung tenaciously to an [ɛɪ] pronunciation of <er> words. Duponceau reveals a clear sociolinguistic gap of appreciation in America of the centralized pronunciation that had been gaining popularity in late 18th-century London, writing as late as 1818 that in America:

The vulgar pronunciation of these words and others similarly spelt, is *fur*; *sur*; *thurd*, *burd*, but I do not think it correct. Walker and Sheridan, have adopted it in their pronouncing dictionaries, except as to the word *fir*, in which they differ, Sheridan representing it by *fur*, and Walker by *fer*, by which he indicates the short sound of the letter e in the words *met*, *bet*. (Duponceau, 1818, 253)

Recall Duponceau's claim above that *bird*, *fir*, *sir*, *third* and *firmament* were all pronounced with very short open [æ] as in [bæɪd], [fæɪ], [sæɪ], [θæɪd] and [ˈfæɪməmənt] (Duponceau, 1818, 252). If so, Duponceau and the early American redactors of the town records had a pronunciation that was viewed by middle-class Londoners as typical of lower-class speech. By the early 19th century, Americans considered that [æɪ] the pronunciation was less vulgar than the centralized [əɪ] which, as Trapoteau and Duchet demonstrated was now becoming more acceptable to Londoners.

Significantly, while in London, it would seem that Franklin shifted away from what must have been his natural [æɪ ~ ɛɪ] pronunciations of <ir> and <er> words favouring the more centralized one (at least in the company of Londoners), most likely in an effort to assimilate this English [ɜ(:)ɪ] pronunciation, which he represents almost systematically in his spelling reform as [əɪ]. It is this centralized pronunciation that is reflected in his *Reformed Mode of Spelling*. Could this have been under the influence of Polly Stevenson who also realizes these <er>, <ir> spellings with centralizes [aɪ ~ əɪ], in which case this could be an indication that, despite her high level of education, her accent may have been more representative, in certain respects, of lower-middle-class London speech.

Centralization

More generally, I would add that it may be that the [aɪ ~ ɒɪ] variants compounded with the effects of a post-vocalic approximant or retroflex /r/ [ɹ ~ ɻ], that may been the root cause of this centralization to [əɪ], particularly unstressed syllables. Indeed, centralization occurs quite naturally in unstressed syllables: *ordured* [ˈɒɪdə-d] for “ordered,” *mastur* [ˈmæstə] for “master,” *after* [ˈæftə] for “after,” *naythur* [ˈnɛ(i)ðə ~ ˈnæiðəɪ?] for “neither.”

Above, we saw in the New England and New York records examples such as “confirmed” spelt *confarmed* (1683) and *confurmed* (1682) (Groton records, Mass.) as well as *thard* [θæɪd] (1664) (Hempstead records, NY), next to *thurd* [θəɪd] (1671) (Watertown records, Mass) and so on, showing once again that these [æɪ ~ əɪ] variants co-existed and were part of the 17th-century feature pool. It may well be that the centralization of the lowered [aɪ ~ ɒɪ] variants were encouraged by the effects of a post-vocalic, retroflex /r/ [ɹ ~ ɻ], a factor that may have facilitated the shift to centralized [əɪ].

It is important to point out, however, that centralization was not a recent

phenomenon in America. As early as the 17th century, Orbeck (1927, 31) gives numerous examples *burds*, (Watertown, 1669), *burch* for “birch” (Dedham, 1680, Plymouth, 1663, Groton, 1682), *burches* “birches” (Groton, 1680), *burchen*¹⁶ “birches” (-en plural, probably meaning a “copse” at this time), Plymouth 1663, *furst* “first” (Groton, 1666, Watertown, 1671), *forst* [fɔɪst] “first” (Groton 1682), *shurts*, [ʃɔɪts] (Watertown, 1671), *thurd* [θəɪd] (Groton, 1683, Watertown, 1671), *thirdly* [θəɪdli] (Groton, 1683), *thurdy* [θəɪti] (Groton, 1682, Watertown, 1679), *thurtene* [θəɪtɛ:n] (Watertown, 1677), *thurten* [θəɪtɛ:n] (Groton, 1683), *confurm* [kɒn'fəɪm] “confirm” (Groton, 1685), *confurmed* [kɒn'fəɪmd] (Groton, 1685), *aformative* [ə'fɔɪmətrɪv] (Dedham, 1703). Krapp 1925, 170) cites the following examples, all from the Watertown records: *hur* for “her” (1647), *survice* (1658) for “service” and *wurk* (1672) for “work.” All of these examples were probably perceived as a “vulgar” but common pronunciations in the 17th century.

Conclusion

The point here is that in 17th-century New England, vernacular speakers were pronouncing words containing <ir> and <er> as [ɛɪ ~ æɪ ~ əɪ]. This is clearly demonstrated by the *Gersham* [ˈɡɛɪʃəm], *Garsham* [ˈɡæɪʃəm], and *Gurshom* [ˈɡəɪʃəm] trio cited above (all in 1693, nine years prior to Franklin’s birth).

These three competing pronunciations were obvious elements of the New England feature pool. That the centralized form was considered “vulgar” by educated 18th-century New Englanders is certain (Duponceau, 1818). Webster advocated the [ɛɪ] pronunciation as being the most prestigious while [æɪ] was considered acceptable as well. On the contrary, in London [æɪ] was viewed as being vulgar while [əɪ] was gaining in acceptance.¹⁷ Franklin favoured the [ɛɪ ~ æɪ] pronunciations in his natural idiom but, once again, the fact that Franklin universally adopted the centralized pronunciation in all the contexts in his RMS, using his *yr* [ɪɪ ~ əɪ] transcription, very strongly suggests that he had adopted a popular London model, possibly at the suggestion of Polly Stevenson.

16 The use of -en plurals was far more frequent in previous centuries; it has survived in English but not American dialects. Viereck (1985, 265) states, “It appears that the weak declension plural form *housen* either did not cross the Atlantic at all or has since died out in the United States.” As pointed out in Chapters 11 and 12, *housen* is frequently recorded in the New England town records and *birchen* is another example of this weak declension in early America. I counted thirteen examples of *housen* in the Southold records of Massachusetts alone. I have previously proposed a hypothesis that in late ME or EME dialect, -en adopted a collective or dual function in some varieties: *houses* (generic) vs *housen* (collective, = “a hamlet” in Oxfordshire, OED), *brothers* (generic) vs *brethren* (collective, with an affective connotation), *childer* (dialect, generic) vs *children* (collective), *oxes* (generic) vs *oxen* (collective), *eyes* (generic vs *een* (collective or dual)), *shoes* (collective) vs *shoon* (collective or dual)...

17 Cf. For a northern English and Scottish perspective, see Joan Beal’s discussion of V + r (Beal, 1999, 180-186).

19. Low Front Vowel: /æ/ (< ME /a/)

Raising of ME /a:/ > [ɛ:] > [ɛ̄:]

Dobson (1968, 594) argues that ME /a:/ “must have been a front vowel, namely, [a:]” and that it developed into [æ:] between the 15th and 16th centuries (ibid., 548). By 1670, [æ:] was the normal pronunciation, even among educated speakers. However, it was further modified in certain environments and replaced by [ɛ:] among “less careful” speakers during the 16th century. After 1650, the new generation of “careful speakers” adopted this [ɛ:] pronunciation.

In his account of the diachronic development of ME [ɛ:], Dobson (1968, 606-607) reminds the reader that, ME long [a:] began to rise around 1500 and was raised to [ɛ:] (cf. below) in words such as *fade*, *bake*, *hate*, etc. and, by 1700, to [ɛ̄:] where it remained throughout the 18th century. We have seen numerous examples, however, where lower realizations survived alongside it. After 1800, however, ME /a:/ developed into the [eɪ] diphthong now heard in RP and GA, but once again, this was far from being a uniform process. We have already seen in the preceding chapter that *Wait* words were still pronounced /ɛi/ in New England and this could have served as an analogical trigger stimulus which spread to reflexes of ME /a:/. Multiple examples of Franklin’s rhymes suggest that this may have been the case as early as the 18th century in certain varieties.

Across large swaths of southern England and in Wales, [ɛ̄: ~ ɛ:] continues to be the majority pronunciation in such words (*Survey of English Dialects*, 1969, 1970, 1971; *Survey of Anglo-Welsh Dialects*, Parry, 1977, 1979). This seems to have been the picture in late 18th-century New England as well. In the North of England and Scotland, the vowel of *make*, *take*, *shake*, *name*, etc. was shortened to [a] and these words were pronounced [mak], [tak], [ʃak], [nam] respectively until the present time. A modified pronunciation arose alongside it with [ɛ̄: ~ ɛ:]. Today this [a] is highly stigmatized and recessive but was in common use until recently (below, see Ellis’ remark about the quality of this vowel in the mid-19th century).

The course followed by ME /a:/, corresponding to *Face* words, appears to have steadily progressed as follows: [a:] > [æ:] > [ɛ:] > [ɛ̄:] > [ɛ̄:]. Lowell’s examples of *scare* as [ski:ɪ], *chair* [tʃi:ɪ], etc. show that, in some cases, the New England

pronunciation went a stage further. Lass (1999, 92-93) summarizes the data for his Lineage III category as follows:

Fig. 19.1 Lass’ General London standard: 1550-1650.

Lineage III				
	ME	1550	1650	
Daze	a:	> a:/æ:	> ε:	
Days	ai	> ai/æi	> ε:	
Seas	ε:	> ε:	> e:	

* As indicated throughout, I interpret Lass’ /e:/ for “seas” to have had the value of either [ɛ: ~ ɛ:]

We have seen that the [æi] and [ɛi] pronunciations of *Wait* words continued persisted into the 18th century in New England alongside the [ε: ~ ɛ:] of *Meat* words as well as occasional [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] pronunciations of *Fleece* words.

Grandgent (1899, 218) writes that, in his day, “older” [æ] and [ε] co-existed in a few lexically-specific New England words. He gives the examples of [pɛɪ] and [pæɪ] for “to pare” (to whittle down). This [æɪ] pronunciation is thus a relic of a pronunciation that was far more widespread.

Raising of ME /a/ > /æ/

Görlach (2012, 598) cites linguists such as Faiß (1989, 36), Lass (1999, 85) and Nevalainen (2006, 124) who state that ME /a/ was raised to /æ/ in the mid-17th century. However, he goes on to say that this position is contested by Minkova (2001, 85), who concludes from scribal and rhyming evidence that this /æ/ vowel has remained unchanged since the Old English period in the southern dialects of Middle English. I would not contest her conclusion, but I would simply add that this could not have occurred everywhere in the South. This kind of generality can only apply to limited regions.

In keeping with the general principles of my approach, which cautions against overly linear interpretations of the evolution of English phonology, Wells (1989, 345) makes two interesting remarks regarding the quality and quantity of the *Trap* vowel which may contradict Minkova’s position. “In most rural western speech the *Trap* vowel is qualitatively [a] rather than [æ].” Likewise, he adds that *Bath* and *Start* vowels are also [a] noting that “any phonemic distinction between *gas* ~ *grass*, *carry* ~ *starry*, would have to depend on duration alone” (ibid.). These distinctions are probably not recent and Burton (2010), citing 19th-century sources such as Barnes, Ellis and Elsworthy, shows this same [a] (and not [æ]). Again, although occasional [æ] variants exist in both regions, this [a] is

also shared with the North of England.¹

The only other possibility is that these western and northern pronunciations result from a later reversion from /æ(:)/ back to /a(:)/ at some point during the EME period. In terms of probability, this appears very unlikely. This /a(:)/ pronunciation appears to represent continuity from late Middle English period.

Secondly, Wells makes the point that “in general vowel length is not as important phonologically in the west as it is in other parts of England. Traditionally short vowels are lengthened in many environments, so that one may have pronunciations of the type [dɪ:d] *did*,² [stɛ:m] *stem*, [fla:ʃ] *flash*, [tɒ:p] *top*, [pʊ:s] *puss*.” He gives the example of *bad* RP /bæd/ which is pronounced [ba:d] in the West Country (Wells, 1989, 345). Wells’ remark about vowel length not being phonologically important in the West of England is precisely what Wells says about American English in the introduction to his *Longman’s Pronunciation Dictionary* (2012) and, as he explains, it would be the reason American linguists generally do not indicate vowel length (i.e. it is not phonemic for them).

In Chapter 17 (section 1), I made a similar observation regarding the tendency among American speakers to lengthen vowels that are normally considered short/lax in RP [æ], particularly before voiced consonants in stressed syllables, for instance, [kæ:p] “cap” and [kæ:b] “cab,” [sæ:t] “sat” and [sæ:d] “sad,” [tæk] “tack” and [tæg] “tag,” etc. Note that breaking occurs in these environments in southern US English (“sad” [sæjəd]...). I believe that this trait is probably an inheritance from older, basilectal-type southern English varieties rather than an innovation (i.e. the southern-half of England including the Midlands).

2.1 ME /a/ > [æ(:)] > [ɛ(:)] > [ɛ:]

As mentioned for the front short vowels [ɪ] and [e], a common treatment of ME /a/ is to be raised to [a ~ æ] and, from there, to [ɛ]. Many *Trap* vowels were lengthened and fell together with *Face* words following GVS treatment of ME /a:/ > [ɛ:]. Mazarin (2020, 6, footnote 7) gives yet another development citing Bellot (1586) who records *are*, *father*, *have* with [æ:], but *half* as [ha:lf] in his (Bellot’s) transcriptions of popular London speech. Hodges, a Londoner, also has [æ:] for “father.” Being a Frenchman, one wonders whether this [æ:] may in fact have been [ɛ:], a pronunciation which is recorded for *are* in the LALME (cf. Duponceau has difficulties in making this distinction when he describes [ɛ] as an “è ouvert” and [æ] as an “è plus ouvert” (Duponceau, 1818, 253, cf. Chapter 18).

By the 16th century, the shift from [a(:)] to [æ(:)] (< ME a) in *Square* words

1 Wells (1989, 345) makes an interesting observation, stating that “I have been initially misled into taking a Plymouth man for a northerner on the basis of a shortish [a] in *last*.”

2 Cf. ME /ɪ/ > /i:/ above and Fenimore Cooper’s transcription *diiid* and my hypothesis regarding the possible source of breaking.

moved a step further to [ɛ(:)] but in various dialects the [æ(:)] pronunciation survived after 1650, suggesting that it was brought to the American colonies under this form and was, at least for a time, part of the feature pool. The raising of [æ:] > [ɛ:] was already widespread by the 17th century and the Hempstead records (NY) show that it had been extended to words like “father” which is spelt *feather* and *ffeather* [fɛ:ðə(ɪ)] (1665) in that document and shows the variation between [ɛ:] and [æ:] in such words seen previously. This last example has survived to the present day in wide areas of England and Scotland. Wright (1905, 431-432) gives forms such as [fɛðəɪ] or even [fɛ:dəɪ] for parts of Cheshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire as well as Suffolk, Essex and Dorset, etc. while [fæ:ðəɪ] is given for Shropshire, Buckinghamshire, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and [væ(:)ðəɪ] for Dorset. On the other hand, Shorrocks (1998, 179) also gives *rather* as [ɹɛ:ðə(ɪ)] (as does Franklin!) and *water* as [wɛ:θə(ɪ)]. He also transcribes *tomatoes* as American-sounding [tə'mɛ:təz].

The Hempstead records (NY) also have *peath* [pɛ:θ] for “path” in 1679. Interestingly, this [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] pronunciation was proposed by Walker for the young, higher-class ladies of London in his 1791 pronouncing dictionary. *Piert* [pjɛ:(ɪ)t] for “part” (1660) is given rather than [pæ:(ɪ)t] (or [pa:(ɪ)t]) showing a glide following bilabial [pʲ]/[pʲ] (cf. Krapp, 1925, 56). Shorrocks (1998, 222) also gives palatal [j] after [b] in “beat” [bjɛt] and “beaten” [bjɛtn] (cf. palatal glides after velar stops /k/ and /g/ in Chapter 23, Consonants).

The Watertown records (Mass.), for instance, give examples such as *Jenery* [dʒɛnɛri] for “January” (1654). In the Groton records (Mass.) it is rendered *Genewar* [dʒɛnəwæɪ] (1681). Nevertheless, the clerk who registered Benjamin Franklin's birth writes *Benjamin Son of Josiah Frankling³ & Abiah his Wife born 6 Janry 1706*, “January” was presumably pronounced [dʒænɪi] here. The Watertown records (Mass.) also provide examples such as *Mege* [mɛ(:)gɛ] for “Maggie” (*Meg* may be a variant pronunciation) as well as *Rendall* [ɹɛ(:)ndəl] for “Randall” (1655) and *fleg* [flɛ(:)g] for “flag” (1661).

The Groton records (Mass.) give *sellerie* [sɛ(:)ləɪi] for “salary” (1681) and *slent* [slɛ(:)nt] for “slant” (1682) while the Springfield records (Mass.) give *mester* and *mestr* [mɛ(:)stə] for “master” (1653). This may well reflect the original OF pronunciation: [mɛstr]⁴ modern Fr [mɛtrɛ]. Put another way, the current RP/GA pronunciation represents the lowering of the French vowel from [ɛ] > [æ].

Words such as *haste* and *waste* were normally pronounced [wɛ:st] and [hɛ:st]

3 I see the spelling of Franklin with -ing here as a possible hypercorrection on the part of the clerk. New Englanders (cf. Lowell) and well-educated Englishmen commonly pronounced -ing [ɪn] and the scrivener may simply have wanted to reconstitute the name as he thought it “should be” pronounced.

4 This word was also borrowed into Breton and survives today as monosyllabic *mestr* [mɛst(r)].

by the second half of the 17th century (cf. Philips and Wilmot's rhymes) although a few [æ] pronunciations may have lingered on. But, in his poem, "How to Make Riches" (*Poor Richard's Almanack*, 1749), Franklin himself rhymes *waste* with *last*.

Weigh every small Expence, and nothing *waste*,
Farthings long sav'd, amount to Pounds at *last*. 1749

The most likely interpretation is that both words are pronounced here with a vowel close to [ɛ: ~ ε:]: [wɛ(:)st] and [lɛ(:)st] respectively with *last* showing the New England proclivity for raising (cf. ME a > ε). For reasons of assonance, this interpretation would seem to be reinforced by the presence of *weigh* [wɛ:], which introduces the first line of the couplet, as well as "saved" [sɛ:vd].

Barlow also gives similar rhymes coupling *haste* ~ *east*, while Dwight rhymes *haste* ~ *overpass'd* (all with [ɛ: ~ ε:]) as well as *space* [spɛ:s] ~ *glass* [glɛ:s], again showing New England raising of [æ:] > [ε:]. Likewise, in a triple rhyme, Dwight has *vast* [vɛ:st] ~ *pass'd* [pɛ:st] ~ *waste* [wɛ:st] showing this same tendency.⁵ Although Wright (1905, 667) provides no survivals of *waste* with [æ] in his *English Dialect Grammar* nor in his *English Dialect Dictionary* (1898) the most likely possibility then is that *last*, *vast*, *pass'd* and *glass* were indeed pronounced with raised [ε:] or [ɛ:] as suggested by the spelling of *peath* for "path" and *piert* for "part" cited in the 17th-century New York records above. However, see the passage from [æ:] > [a: ~ ɑ:] below. This raised [ε:] pronunciation is close to the one prescribed for upper-class young women in London towards the end of the 18th century.

Very interestingly for our story, the Plymouth and Easthampton records, Massachusetts, both give the forms *hev*, *heve* [hɛ(:)v] as examples of *have* in 1700, the latter being recorded only six years before Franklin's birth. "Has" *hez* is precisely the transcription Franklin records for his orthographic reform in his own 1768 transcriptions alongside *er* and *eer* [ɛ(:)ɹ ~ ɛ(:)ɹ] for "are" (cf. Chapter 26).⁶ Note that the LALME (Map 17 ARE) shows that the <er> forms of "are" are largely concentrated in the Northeast of England (Lincolnshire) with smaller groupings in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Grandgent (1899, 227) also records this feature as being typical of New England and gives an example with [hɛ:v] for "have." J. R. Lowell's *Biglow Papers*

5 The Modern Breton word *hast* [hast] was also borrowed from OF *haste* (modern French *hâte*) with the same meaning as in English but has retained the original pronunciation.

6 Dobson thinks *ain't* stems from the generalization of "aren't" with r-loss. Such forms in [ɛ.ɪnt] would fit neatly with this hypothesis. Shorrocks shows Bolton *ent* for "have not" with h-loss. Hall (1942, 24) gives [heint] "hasn't" "haven't" alongside [ent] and [hent]... *Ain't*, so commonly associated today with American English, shows the following evolutive pattern: I am not > I amn't [a:mnt] > [a:nt > [æ:nt] > [ɛ:nt] > [ɛ:nt] 19th-century [ɛɪnt], which came to be used with all persons in the affirmative in the Southeast and Southwest of England: *I'm*, *thee'm*, *we'm*, *you'm* and *they'm*.

(1848) also offer multiple examples of this and similar examples of raising. Krapp describes these as typical 19th-century “rustic” New England speech (cf. Krapp, 1925, 93). Its presence in Franklin’s speech is thus clearly an inheritance of the 17th-century founder generation and offers excellent evidence that this was his natural pronunciation that he must have inherited during his childhood in Boston. Hall (1942, 24) gives “[ɛnt], [hɛnt] and [kɛnt]” for *hasn’t*, *haven’t* and *can’t* (cf. see below for more regarding *can’t*).

Wright (1905, 475) indicates *hez* as being common to Shropshire, and regions of Scotland (Forfar, Perth, Lothian, Edinburgh) and *’ez* for large areas of Lancashire, Cheshire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Oxfordshire, Kent and Sussex. The loss of word initial /h-/ in English is a relatively recent phenomenon, however, and it can be assumed that the dominant pronunciation in the aforementioned areas was still largely *hez* in the 17th century. There are only two examples of *hes* forms given by the LALME (Map 160-40) but these are found in the far north of England, hence not directly relevant to our discussion. “Have” (inf.) is not found under any form resembling *hev* (LALME 160-20). “Had,” however, is found under multiple forms such as *hed*, *hedde*, *hede*, *heden*, *heuede* and *heth* stretching from Norfolk and Suffolk all across central England (Map 160-60 HAD). The pertinent *hes* and *hev* forms may have arisen at some point during the late ME or EME period.

Likewise, Wright (1905, 476) gives *hev* (with long and short [ɛ]) for areas of Scotland as well as *’ev* for the North (Cumbria Yorkshire, Lancashire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Rutland, Leicestershire, but also Warwickshire, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Kent and Sussex), the last areas being where the bulk of the Massachusetts population originated. Norfolk: For “have” and “has” the SED give only [hev] in seven out of thirteen localities in Norfolk and only one occurrence of *has*. This explained by the fact that *haveth/heveth* was the older form, not *has* (a northern pronunciation). With the loss of final <-th>, this left only [hev] which is common in AAVE as well (He have, he say, he do, etc.), just as in older Norfolk speech. Interestingly, Suffolk has [hev(εθ)] for “haveth” (Orton & Tilling, 1971, 1281).

Not only does Lowell (1848) give *hev* and *hed* for “have” and “had,” but he also transcribes “has” as *hes* [hɛːz] “has,” “that” as *thet* [ðet], “as” as *ez* [ɛz] and “caught” as *ketchd* [kɛtʃt] (i.e., irregular past part. “caught,” common in large regions of England), all with [ɛ] or [ɛː]. Other examples I have noted in the *Biglow Papers* are *gethered* [gɛðə(ɪ)d ~ ’gɛðə(ɪ)d] for “gathered” (cf. Franklin’s rhyme of *gather* [gɛːðəɪ] and *rather* [ˈɹɛːðəɪ] below) and *hendy* [hɛ(:)ndi ~ ’hɛ(:)ndi] for “handy”).

Gachelin (1981, 538 cited in Burton, 2010, 52) notes *together* for Dorset in his PhD thesis on William Barnes, showing a passage from [æ] > [ɛ] > [ɪ]. We can assume that these features must have been widely present in 17th-century

colonial America and, without doubt, these are an inheritance from English varieties of EME.

As mentioned previously, the standard spelling of a given word often masks its real pronunciation and this can only be revealed through rhyme. For instance, in a poem written by Franklin in his *Poor Richard's Almanack*, I interpret the following rhymes represent [ɛ: ~ ɛ̇:]. In this particular case, the pronunciation of “have” corresponds well to the one he proposes in his RMS.

So he his judgment *gave*,
And lawyer-like he thus resolv'd
What each of them should *have*... (1744)

Sam had the worst Wife that a Man could *have*, (1735)
Proud, Lazy, Sot, could neither get nor *save*,

'Tis Constitution makes us *chaste* and *brave*,
Justice from Reason and from Heav'n we *have*; (1756)

Although these pronunciations are not represented orthographically, they are very clear in terms of his intended rhyme: *gave* [gɛ:v] ~ *have* [hɛ:v], *have* [hɛ:v] ~ *save* [sɛ:v] but also *saving* ['sɛ:viŋ] ~ *having* ['hɛ:viŋ] in a poem composed in 1757.

The final couplet is interesting with regard to assonance of *chaste* [tʃɛ:st] and *brave* [brɛ:v]. In the second line it is possible that “justice” is realized as [ˈdʒɛstɪs] (cf. “just” [dʒɛst]) while “reason” is realized as [ˈɹɛ:zən]. The question is whether “heav'n” is [ˈhɛ:vŋ] in this case rather than [hɛ:vŋ ~ ˈhɪ:vŋ] as stipulated above.

Likewise, just as Dwight's rhyme *waste* [wɛ:st] ~ *vast* [vɛ:st], Franklin rhymes *west* [wɛ(-)st] ~ *last* [lɛ:st] (1749), *race* [ɹɛ:s] ~ *pass* [pɛ:s] (1750) and so on. Recall the pronunciation of *path* written *peath* [pɛ:θ ~ pɛ:θ] in the Hempstead records (New York, 1679) which shows the pronunciation was well anchored in the northern colonies by the 17th century.

In his *Poor Richard's Almanack* (1735), he pairs *racking* ~ *taking*, once again suggesting that *racking* was pronounced [ˈɹɛ(:)kiŋ ~ ɹɛ:kiŋ] ~ [ˈtɛ:kiŋ ~ ˈtɛ:kiŋ]. Recall Krapp's remark about *rack* being an older pronunciation of *wreck* (1925, 92)!

To be commended still its Brains are *racking*,
But who will give it what it's always *taking*? (1735)

Past [pɛ:st] is made to rhyme with *taste* [tɛ:st]. His examples of this kind are numerous.

Stays till the last and meanest Drudge be *past*,
And, till his Slaves have drank, disdains to *taste*. (1756)

This hypothesis is strengthened by Burton (2010, 65) who records Barnes as pronouncing words such as *ask*, *bath*, *castle*, *craft*, *gasp*, *glass*, *grass*, *last*, *laugh*,

staff with either /a:/ or /ɛ:/. Other examples given by Burton are [lɛ:st] for “last,” [ʔ:ftəɪ] for “after,” [hɛ:f] for “half,” [lɛ:f] for “laugh” and hɛ:v] for “have” (ibid.) For Hilton, Dorset, he cites [ɛ:dəɪ'nu:n] for “afternoon,” [ɛ:nt] for *aunt*, [kɛ:nt] for *can't*, [kɛ:f] for *calf*, [fɛ:ðəɪ] for *father* (ibid.) With regard to *can't* [kɛ:nt], Burton (ibid., 66) gives [kɛ:nt] as an alternate Dorset pronunciation.

This last example recalls Hall's [kɛnt] for the Smokies above. *Can't* is pronounced [kɛint] by traditional speakers in rural Virginia and Franklin's 1734 description of the word “panther” being realized as *painter* in colonial Pennsylvania English of his day, is a pronunciation which is also confirmed by Hall in the Smokies. Considering the migration from Pennsylvania and Delaware into the Appalachians during the last quarter of the 18th century, this realization appears to be a relic from this early period.

One final example is more challenging, namely, Franklin's rhyme of *gather* ~ *thither* (1734) in the following couplet:

Where carcasses are, eagles will *gather*,
And where good laws are, much people flock *thither*.

As noted above, Gachelin (1981, 538), however, recorded [tə'gɪðəɪ] for Dorset and it is known that the migration of southwestern Englishmen during the second wave of settlement to Massachusetts was considerable during the 17th century. It is thus entirely possible that this feature may have been one of the competitors in the feature pool from which Franklin drew some of his rhymes. Nevertheless, based on Lowell's spelling of “gather” as *gether*, Franklin's usual pronunciation of *gather* is likely to have been the same, namely, [gɛ(:)ðəɪ] (cf. Nares below), just like his pronunciation of “rather” [ɪɛ:ðəɪ ~ ɪɛðəɪ] (below) while *thither* is most likely pronounced here as [θɛðəɪ] showing the typical New England tendency (via Suffolk) to lower ME /i/ > /ɛ/. Another similar rhyme in the following couplet supports this analysis suggesting that both words are pronounced with [ɛ ~ ɛ:]:

Content and Riches seldom meet *together*,
Riches take thou, contentment I had *rather*. (1743)

Here too, contemporary English dialects show the pronunciation of *rather* with [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] was alive and well until recently, for example, Bolton English [ɪɛ:ðəɪ] (cf. Shorrocks, 1998, 179).

We have seen that the competition between *catch* and *ketch* as noted above in the *Biglow Papers* and other sources has been a longstanding one and is discussed by 18th-century orthoepists. The competition continues today. *Ketch* can be traced back at least to the 17th century according to Krapp (1925, 92). Type D speakers, Walker (1791) and Nares (1792) accept pronunciations with [ɛ] as correct in a number of words although the former writes that it is “corrupt but received” in *any*, *many*, *catch* and *Thames*. Nares (*General Rules*, p. 10) gives

catch, *gather*, *January*, *jasmin*, *many*, *radish* and *thank* as having [ɛ] (cf. Krapp, 1925, 93). The same examples show the chaotic nature of the RP system: [kætʃ]/[ketʃ], [gæðə]/[tʊ'geðə], [meni], [ɛni], [θæŋk]...

Franklin's poems, although few in number, contain numerous clues demonstrating that he pronounced his words in the true New England fashion of his day, a pronunciation which can also reflect the East Midland English current in areas such as Norfolk and Suffolk.

Once again, Shorrocks gives numerous examples of RP /æ/ realized as [ɛ]: ['setdi] for "Saturday" (note the example of "rustic" Massachusetts English *satdi* given by Grandgent, (1899, 215)), [ɛs] for "ash", [slek] for "slack", ['ɛdɪʃɪz] for "radishes" (compare with Cobb's "redish" above) and [ɛz] for "has" with h-loss by Shorrocks (1998, 222), spelt *hez* by Lowell (1848).

Modern standard English possesses doublets such as etymologically-related *thresh* and *thrash* which are simply variant pronunciations of the same word that have deviated semantically in standard English with "thresh" meaning to "extract the grain or seeds of a cereal plant by beating with a flail" while to "thrash" means "to violently strike or beat someone." Wright (1905, 645) records *thresh* as [θɹæʃ], but only in Kent and Scotland while [dɹæʃ] is given for Somerset.

Once again, when regional variants are taken into account, we see the complication of our task. For this reason, these variable pronunciations are only the tip of the iceberg and should be viewed as approximations. Nevertheless, they give an idea of the wide range of competing pronunciations that once existed in the original North American feature pool. For a word such as "rather" or "gather," the phonetic range spanned [a(:) ~ æ(:) ~ ɛ(:) ~ ɐ(:)]. It is these kinds of variant forms that were invariably used at a time when no uniform standard pronunciation was yet in place. Variety was thus the rule and it is almost certainly why, aside from orthoepists whose goal it was to record and define "polite" pronunciation, contemporary writers, including Franklin, rarely ever speak about "accent" but rather of "clear articulation," "fluency" and "eloquence" (cf. Franklin prescriptive vision of English, Chapter 14).

Again, Franklin shows no inclination for lowering in his RMS and, as we have seen, his natural tendency was to raise [æ] > [ɛ] in many environments where, as we shall soon see, lowering was the norm. We have already seen that 17th-century New Englanders pronounced "path" (spelt *peath* in the Easthampton records, Massachusetts (1681)), as [pɛ:θ]. Interestingly, Beal (1999, 22) cites Horn and Lehnert (1954, 343) who quote the remarks of a certain Georg Christoph Lichtenberg who lived in England in 1770 and 1774, who stated:

"zierlichen Mädchen" (dainty young ladies) pronounced the <a> in *nasty* so high that it sounded almost like *nehstī* and his comment that this was in order to avoid the "vulgar" [ɑ:]. Such insights add to the picture of the sociolinguistic complexity of variation between 'long' and 'short' reflexes of ME /a/ in the later eighteenth century.

3. Conditioned Changes: ME /a:/ and ME /a/

In this section, we see the opposite treatment of EME [æ(:)] examined in section 2.2, that is, lowering to [a:] and [ɑ:] in a variety environments described as “sequences” directly below. There is no trace of this in Franklin’s poems or in his RMS. Already, this highlights the fact that there were at least two major variants in competition within the 17th- and 18th-century New England feature pool: raised [æ: ~ ε:] in Franklin’s speech (and Sequence 3 below), and lowered [a: ~ ɑ: ~ ɒ:] variants depending on the environment in sequences 1–5 in most other varieties.

Historically, we have seen that ME /a:/ was raised in southern England from [a:] > [æ:] between 1500 to 1650. However, we have seen that this probably did not occur throughout all of England. ME /a:/ probably remained [a:] throughout the West Country, parts of the Southwest as well as the North of England. Under the effects of the GVS, [æ:] was raised to [ε:] after the mid-17th century.

By the end of the 17th century, ME /a/ [æ(:)] had already been lowered to [a:] in parts of southern England in the following contexts which will be examined below:

- Sequence 1 - <a> + -al(l), -alf, -alk, -alm
- Sequence 2 - <a> + -aff, -aft, -ass, -ast, -ask, -ath [θ], -ath [ð], -age [ʒ]
- Sequence 3 - <a> + -ant, -ance, nci, -anch, nge, -ambre, -ample
- Sequence 4 - <a> + -ar
- Sequence 5 - <a> preceded by wa-, wha-, qua-

NB: For ME /aχ/ <augh(t)> see ME /oχ/ <ogh> (Chapter 23, Diphthongs)

In support of what was said just above, [a:] was further lowered to [ɑ:]. This interpretation is supported by Dobson (1968, 545-546) (cf. Daines below). This means that current traditional Massachusetts pronunciation of these features has basically retained the 17th-century realization of eastern England during the first stage of the shift in the environments described below, [æ] > [a:].

In contemporary Massachusetts English, lowering in words like *path* [pa:θ] and *half* [ha:f] is recessive and generally only heard north of Boston. *Calm* [ka:m], *aunt* [a:nt], *father* [ˈfa:ðə], *park* [pa:k], etc. are more common (German, personal notes, Fairhaven/Mattapoisett, New Bedford, Mass.; see also Nagy & Roberts, 2008, 258). In 18th-century New England as in England, the lowering of [æ:] > [a:] > [ɑ:] in sequences 2 through 5 were viewed as “vulgar.” Ironically, this lowered pronunciation is now a salient, prestigious feature associated with RP English.

In his *Reformed Mode of Spelling* (1779), Franklin transcribes most of the

words in sequences 2, 3, 4, 5 with [æ] or [ɛ:]. At the end of the 18th century this pronunciation was viewed as prestigious and was advocated by John Walker in his 1791 *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary*. Could this be one of the features of American English which led 18th-century English travellers to describe the colonial American koines in such glowing terms (cf. Chapter 11)?

Interestingly, Noah Webster firmly believed, incorrectly as it turns out, that the lowering of [æ:] > [a:] was an older and thus “purer” feature of English. It was a realization common to his native Connecticut during his lifetime (probably a popular pronunciation). This was one of the many arguments he proposed to demonstrate that the New Englanders had preserved the pronunciation of the English golden age of language and literature which he and Franklin placed between the 16th and the first quarter of the 18th century. For this reason, he argued that New England English should serve as the national American model of pronunciation. It also explains why this lowered [a:] pronunciation was still recommended until recently in the Merriam-Webster dictionary even though it has never been a general characteristic of American English. Webster’s ideological opinions on this point will be explained more fully in Chapters 29 and 30 and contrasted with Franklin’s views.

3.1 Sequence 1: ME /a/ + <l>, <lf>, <lk>, <lm>

When followed by <l> or <ll>, in words such as “all,” “call” and “almighty,” orthographic <a> is generally realized in RP as [ɔ:l] and [p:l ~ ɑ:l] in GA respectively. We shall see in Chapters 25 and 26 that Franklin uses his fused <aa> character RMS vocalic system before <l(l)>. In the case of “all,” for instance, in one instance, he doubles this vowel <aa aa l>. I shall argue that its value ranges between [p: ~ ɑ:]. Note too that this [p: ~ ɑ:] pronunciation is given for the modal “shall” by both Webster (1789, 114) and Ellis (1869, 1067) who record [ʃɒl] rather than [ʃæl] (cf. Hart (1569) *shawl* and Wilkins (1668) *shal*).

Orbeck (1927, 40) cites evidence from the town records that goes along these lines: “ME -al (which in Early Modern English became -aul) was in the records pronounced [ɔ:l] in *oltured*, “altered” (Groton 1705) and *oltring* (Groton 1682).” We have already pointed out that American phoneticians’ use of [ɔ:] often represents unrounded IPA [p:] (cf. also Chapter 20). Elsewhere we have seen that , <or>, spellings were pronounced [p:l] or [p:ɪ].

ME /a/ followed by <al(l)>, <alf>, <als>, <alk>, <alt> <alm> offers an interesting case which relates directly to the upcoming discussion on Franklin’s transcriptions in Part IV. Very early, ME short a + /l/ resulted in the vocalization of /l/ (probably velar or “dark” [ɫ]) and its eventual elision, resulting in [au(ɫ)] > [ɑu]. This stage (Type A) was followed by monophthongization of [au] > [ɑ:] (Type B). The same process occurred in the North of England and expanded to

words where [ɪ] has been preserved in RP/GA.

Dobson (1968, 554) records Hart (1551/1569) as having this [au] diphthong in *almighty* while Wallis (1653) taught that <a> + <l> should be pronounced [au] in words such as *walked* and *talked* which he spells *wauk'd* [waukt] and *tau'k'd* [taukt], perhaps with the lowering of the first element to [ɒu]/[ɒo]. As early as the late 16th century, [au] had already been monophthongized before /k/ in *talk* [tɔ:k], a word which Bullokar (1580) rhymes with *spoke* [spɔ:k] (p. 604).

In the Smokies (and much of the American South), “walked” and “talked” are still pronounced [wɒɔkt] and [tɒɔkt] (Hall, 1942, 32) and this may well be a relic of similar 16th- and 17th-century diphthongal pronunciations. The only diphthongal pronunciations for these two words cited in Wright’s EDG (1905, 633, 665) are [woək] for Cumbria, Yorkshire, Lancashire, [wɛək] for Buckinghamshire and [toək] for Kent, Cumbria, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Warwickshire and Hertfordshire. Burton (2010, 90) interprets Barnes’ 19th-century Dorset spelling of *talk* to have been [tɑ:k] (as in GA). Once again, this parallel is certainly not fortuitous. It also demonstrates that claims that [ɑ:], as opposed to [ɔ:], is an Americanism are false (idem for [dɑ:g], cf. Görlach, 2012, 598).

In modern Lancashire and Yorkshire, “old” is often pronounced [aud] or [ɜyd], etc. and spelt <owd> in northern English dialect writing (Shorrocks, 1998): “Bolton” [ˈbɜrtɒn], “old” [ɜyd], “soldier” [ˈsɜydʒəɪ], etc. and, he adds “*with or without*” /l/, meaning that it appears in free variation. This suggests that that diphthongization may not necessarily have arisen as a consequence of the loss of velar [ɪ] as is often assumed (cf. Dobson, 1968 above). He gives [wɔ:k] and [tɔ:k] for “walk” and “talk.”

This vocalization of l (+ consonant) is a cross-linguistic phenomenon, however, as can be found in Dutch (*oud* for “old”) and in French. Note, however, that the vocalization of [l] in French often took place *after* words such as *fault* [fɔ:lt]/[falt], *veal* [vɛ:l] ([vɛ:l] > [vɛ:l] > [vi:l]) and *false* [fɔls]/[fals] were borrowed into English (i.e., contemporary French *faute* [fɔt], *veau* [vø], *faux* [fø], etc.).⁷

The New York town records offer intriguing insights into these questions. The Hempstead records (NY) provide examples of ME a with the diphthong <au> in *caulfes* for “calves” (1660). If one interprets this spelling literally, this may represent the conservation of the diphthong [au ~ ɔu], which may make the retention of the [l] before [f], less likely: [ˈkau(l)fs ~ ka:f].

By this time, it is likely that many speakers were pronouncing this <au> [a: ~ ɑ: ~ ɒ:], with or without [l]: for instances, [ka:lfs]. Older 17th-century speakers may pronounced *haulf* [hau(l)f ~ ha:lf] for “half” (1661). Orbeck (1927, 40) also gives *mault* [mau(l)t] for “malt” (Plymouth, 1677).

7 Numerous examples of diphthongization survive in regional French dialects: *cheval* [ʃə,vaɪ] in standard French, [ʃwœu] in Gallo dialect, Sucé-sur-Erdre near Nantes (German, personal notes) and the plural *chevaux* in standard French (< Old Francien [ʃə,vals] > [ʃə,vaus] > [ʃə,vɔ]).

As noted above, Franklin transcribes “calm” in his RMS alphabet as **kalm**, indicating that he pronounced it [kælm] for him, with the retention of the [ɫ]. He and Stevenson also pronounce [ɫ] in *should*, *could*, *would*, etc. It is possible that this may be New Englandism (cf. Chapter 28). Wells (1989, 346) observes that, “in the west,” [ɫ] is retained in *calm* and *palm* and pronounced [kalm] and [palm] respectively with lowering.

Hall (1942, 29) writes that *calm* was normally pronounced with [ɒ:] in the Smokies during the 1930s but he states that “a number of very old people pronounced it [kæm] as they do *balm* [bæm]” adding that “variety was always the rule” among the “old-timers” in the Smokies. Recall that American linguists have tended not to indicate vowel length and I suspect that these two words probably had a long [æ:]: [kæ:m] and [bæ:m] respectively.

By the 18th century, the general tendency in southern England and in New England was to pronounce such words with lowered [a:]. Shores (1985, 40), in his description of the English of Tangier Island in the Chesapeake Bay, a region known for its linguistic conservatism, writes that “Depending on its use, *calm* is either [kɔlm] or [kæm]” showing the retention of velar /l/ in this first example. Like Krapp, Shores’ [ɔ] may be, in this environment, closer to IPA [ɒ:], but I may be mistaken here given the recent nature of his work. Significantly, Shores states in his 2001 book *Tangier Island: Place, People, and Talk* that he had not heard [kæ(:)m] personally, which suggests that his former example must have come, like Hall’s, from older relatives and neighbours who reported hearing it used by the older generations. As a native of the island, his testimony is of the utmost importance.

The American Midland variety, generally recognized as the principal source of modern GA, resisted this lowering of [æ:] > [a:] (as in the English Northwest Midlands) in most cases *except* in before /r/ and velar and geminate /l/. In Franklin’s poetry and RMS, Franklin continued to realize ME /a(:)/ as [æ(:)] in words such as *half*, *pass*, *past*, *bath*, *start*, *dance*, etc. in all of the above sequences for Sequence 1 except in *all*, *almighty*, *already*...) which, as we saw above, he transcribes with his fused **aa** [ɒ: ~ ɑ:] character.

3.2 Sequence 2: ME /a/ + <gh> [f], <ght> [ft], <ft>, <ss>, <sk>, <st>, <th> [θ, ð], <ge> [ʒ]

ME /a/ is generally lengthened and lowered to /ɑ:/ before voiceless fricatives in contemporary RP. Among the key words for this category are *bath*, *path*, *laugh*, *draught*, *craft*, *pass*, *last*, *ask*... (cf. Dobson, 1968, 525).

Krapp (1925, 55) cites examples such as <aust> for which, he believes, <au> represents [ɑ:] (or perhaps [a:]). The Hempstead records (NY, I, p. 93) spell *pausters* [ˈpɑ:stə(ɪ)z ~ ˈpɑ:stə(ɪ)z] for “pastures” (1660) and, with Krapp, I agree

that [ˈpaustəɪz] is unlikely here. In Massachusetts, many speakers had already lowered the vowel in words ending in <-ask>, <ast(er)>, <-aught(er)>, <aft(er)> pronouncing it [a:]. This lowering appears *not* to have occurred in “polite” Massachusetts speech (although it is advocated by Webster, 1789, and tolerated by Nares, 1784). In the Pennsylvania colony, /æ/ appears to have been the general rule. Shorrocks (1998, 192) gives words such as *after*, *shaft*, *glass*, *grass*, *plaster*, *passing*, *last*, *half*, *path* and *bath* all with long [æ:], just as in GA. As I pointed out in the introduction to Chapter 17, modern GA is recorded (incorrectly in my opinion) as having a short /æ/ where I have argued it is long. If there is a link here with the Lancashire data, it may be due to the koine that developed in the 17th-century Pennsylvania and Delaware colonies which were settled by Quakers who, in the main, were from the Northwest Midlands (cf. 80% according to Fischer, 1989). Burton (2010, 65) records William Barnes’ Dorset pronunciation of this same category of word as having either [a:] or [ɛ:].

Cooper (1685) gives [ɛ:] in *age* [ɛ:dʒ] (< Old French *aage*, *eage*, late 13th c., [aʒ ~ a:ʒ]) and *strange* [stre:nʒ] (Dobson, 1968, 558). In his RMS, Franklin transcribes “age” as *eedʒ* [ɛ:dʒ] (cf. Chapter 26) proving that he too pronounced such words like Cooper. (Note that /ʃ/ is my IPA interpretation of an h-looking character that he designed especially for his alphabet to respect his principle of “one sound for one letter.”) New England [æ:] > [a:] would thus result from an East Midlands/southeastern English inheritance, a pronunciation which was far more widespread in New England than it is today. Webster, who advocated this lowered pronunciation was from Connecticut, a colony settled by a high percentage of Essex people.

3.3 Sequence 3: a + nasal + C

The words in this category were subjected to different treatments. All are of French origin. In the first group, <a(u)nce>, <a(u)nch>, <ange> and <ample> and <ant>/<and> words are all pronounced with [ã] in modern French and an older variant of this may have influenced southeastern English where contacts with France were the most frequent and where the French language was still associated with higher social status. In contemporary GA, however, the only realization of these spellings is /æ:/ while in RP it is [ɑ:].

English orthoepists disagree about the precise nature of the vowel. Dobson (1968, 556) cites Gil (1619) and Hodges (1649) who recorded *dance* as having both short [æ] or [ɒ:]/[ɑ:]. One can assume that intermediate [a:] was also common. Dobson cites other evidence for the same period showing the same variation in *chance*, *lance* whereas *plant* (OF *plante*), *example* (OF *essample*, late 14th c.), *branch* (< OF *braunch*, 1300), *haunch* (OF *hanche*, early 13th c.), *paunch* (OF *paunce*, 14th c.) and *staunch* (OF *estanche*, 15th c.) are recorded as having short [a] or [æ].

The most common realization of these words in colonial America appears to have been [æ(:)] and, in isolated American speech communities along the east coast these realizations have survived until the present time. This is also a pronunciation which Mazarin (2020, 10) describes as being typical of Cooper's descriptions during the 1680s. Hall (1942, 24) records [hæent] for "haunt," [dæent] "daunt," etc. All these examples have breaking, which suggests that they developed out of an elongated [æ· ~ æ:] that was once commonplace in England (another example of continuity!). Hall (1942, 24, 33), also gives the following example: *sauce* [sæs], *saucer* ['sæsə-], *daughter* ['dætə-], as examined in Sequence 2 above, but also *jaundice* ['djændə-s], ex. "yellow jaundice" ['jælə 'dʒændə-s] (note "yellow" [ɛ] > [æ]). We also examined the treatment of "yellow" in the section dealing with the lowering of ME /ɛ/ > /æ/ and <ow> to [əɪ]. Note that a common modern Massachusetts realization of *aunt* and *aunty* is [æ:nt] and ['æ:nti].

Now, of course, all these words are pronounced with [ɑ:] in GA. Holdovers can be heard in the contemporary American vernacular, however. *Sauce* and *saucy*, for instance, is the ultimate origin of vernacular American "to sass" [sæs] and "sassy" ['sæsi] which, today, tend to be associated with southern US English in expressions such as "Don't you sass me!", with the meaning of "to talk back to s.o." or "to respond in a rude manner to s.o." A "sassy gal," on the other hand, is "a spirited or feisty young woman." I have not ever heard it with sexual implications in American English, however (i.e. saucy).

With regard to the pronunciation of "sauce," Webster (1789, 137) remarks that

Sauce with the fourth sound of *a* (*aa*), is accounted vulgar; yet this is the ancient, the correct and most general pronunciation. The *aw* of the North Britons is much affected of late; *sawce*, *hawnt*, *vawnt*; yet the true sound is that of *aunt*, *jaunt*, and a change can produce no sensible advantage.

These kinds of precious details also tend to pass unnoticed with regard to the pronunciation of toponyms. For instance, the town of *Staunton* in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley is still pronounced ['stæntən] by the locals today (German, personal notes, 2019). Such examples abound in Britain and appear to be echoes of Mazarin's Type C1 variety.

The pronunciation in words spelt <anci>, such as in *ancient* merits an additional word of explanation. It too was borrowed from French (OF *auncyen*, late 14th c.; pronounced [ã,sjẽ] today). Like <-age>, it appears to have been caught up in the GVS resulting in a merger with long ME /a:/ > /æ:/ > /ɛ:/ by the 17th and 18th centuries. Franklin would have pronounced it ['ɛ(:)ɲfənt ~ 'ɛ(:)ɲfənt].

Similar examples are *range* [ɹæ:ndʒ] (OF *rengier*, 1200, related etymologically to *rank*), *change* [tʃɛ:ndʒ] (OF *chaunge*, NF 1200), *stranger* ['strɛ:ndʒəɪ] (*estrangier*

OF, late 14th c.), *angel* [ˈɛ:ndʒəl] (OE *engel* and OF *angele*, 1300), another group of words which appear to have undergone the GVS (Dobson, 1968, 557).⁸ Again, Franklin pronounced all these words with [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] (cf. Chapters 26 and 27) as they still are across large regions of northern and western England and English-speaking Wales (cf. Kirk, Sanderson & Widdowson, 1985, 62).

In southern English varieties, ME [a] and [au] in words such as *plant*, *enchant*, *dance*, *chance*, *branch*, *example*... (sometimes spelt with <au> in EME) are pronounced [ɑ:] (close to the original French pronunciation) but, as we have already seen, in the West Country, parts of the Midlands and the North they were pronounced with a short [a] on analogy with native English words, thus retaining their 15th-century English quality.

See Sequence 5 below for a discussion of /a/ following /w-/ and preceding /r/. See also Chapter 29 for Sir William Jones' transcription of *command* ~ *land* in his rendition of the Addison's poem, "The Campaign."

3.4 Sequence 4: ME /a(:)r/

The treatment of ME /a(:)r/ has been conditioned by factors involving geography, social status and period of use. *Start* words were pronounced [aɪ] during the 15th century (as they still are in the West Country and North of England today (cf. Burton, 2010, Wells, 1989).

Following Mazarin (2020), ME /aɪ/ in *Start* words was raised to [æɪ] during the Type B phase (late 16th century) and then lengthened to [æ:ɪ] during Type C period (17th and 18th centuries). It was then lowered to [a:ɪ] during Type D phase (18th century) where it co-existed alongside older [æ:ɪ] pronunciations, the latter being viewed as posh at the time. Further lowering occurred during the course of the 19th century and the accepted pronunciation is now /aɪ/ in GA and /ɑ:/ in RP respectively.

It is quite clear that lowering to [ɑ: ~ ɒ:] was common in certain environments in lower class speech as early as the 17th century (cf. Sequence 5 below). The English grammarian, Granville Sharp (1735-1813) confirms this in his *Child's First Book* (1801), advocating that *Start* words such as *bard*, *barb*, *hard*, *farm*, *harm* should be pronounced [æɪ], thus revealing the tenacity of this older pronunciation. Sharp was from Durham, however, and this may be a regional

8 As mentioned in the preceding section, it is not impossible that a number of these words entered English with variant OF pronunciations, that is older forms of *auncyen* or *estrange* still realized as [ɛ̃:sjɛ̃] and [ɛ̃:trɛ̃:ʒ] in southern French and Québécois varieties. Note that these two words were also borrowed from French into Breton (i.e., continental Brythonic Celtic) presumably conserving older northwestern dialectal French pronunciations (as a result of the preservation of OF /k/ in the first example): *renkañ* [ˈrɛ̃ŋka] with the meaning of "to arrange, repair," related to English "rank" and *cheñch* [ʃɛ̃:ʃ] (GA [tʃeindʒ]) but *estrañjour* [ɛ̃sˈtrɑ̃:ʒur], borrowed with lowered [ã:] and with the preservation of OF epenthetic /ɛ/ + /s/.

conservative pronunciation. Quoting Sheridan (1780, 22), Krapp (1925, 54) points out that historically short <ar> words continued to be pronounced [æ(:)ɪ] until the late 18th century and, as we have seen, in British and American dialects into the present time. He writes that “When *a* precedes *r* the accent is on the vowel, which is thus made long, though it retains the same sound, as in *car*; *bar*; *far*, evidently pronounced [kæ:ɪ], [bæ:ɪ], [fæ:ɪ].” For the pronunciations of *hard*, *car*; *star*; *tar*; *war*; etc. see below.

As we shall see from the rhymes, this [æ:ɪ] pronunciation was also a characteristic not only of Franklin’s speech but also that of the other New England poets. Duponceau’s minimal pair, *bard* [bæ:ɪd] ~ *bird* [bæɪd], shows that this [æɪ] pronunciation persisted in the Mid-Atlantic states well into the 19th century (Duponceau, 1818, 252). Recall (Chapter 3) that Franklin, when referring to Col. French’s visit to him at Mr. Keimer’s print shop, he writes that the latter was so surprised “he *star’d*” like a “pig stuck,” which I interpret here to be [stæ:ɪd]. For Franklin, it appears that “stare” and “star” would have been homonyms.

In some varieties, the allophones of the ME /a(:)/, ME /ɛ(:)/ and ME /ai/ words fell together, thus jumbling the boundaries of the underlying ME phonemes. For some, the ME /ɛ:/ and /æ:/ phonemes remained distinct. This situation explains the numerous variable rhymes we have encountered with some speakers pronouncing *far* [fæ:ɪ] while others lowered it to [fa:ɪ ~ fa:ɪ ~ fɒ:ɪ]. *Fare* was pronounced either [fɛ:ɪ ~ fæ:ɪ] while *fair* was also pronounced [fɛ:ɪ ~ fæ:ɪ] and variants of thereof (cf. Diphthongs, Chapter 24). Dobson (1968, 560-561) analyzes *farther* as being realized as either [æ] or [ɛ] giving [ˈfɛɪðəɪ ~ ˈfæɪðəɪ] during the 16th-17th centuries.

Dobson writes that the shift from [æ(:)ɪ] > [ɛ(:)ɪ] was, once again, a popular innovation. This occurred quite early in fact because Cheke (1555) is recorded as pronouncing “harvest” as [hɛɪvəst] and Wharton (1654) giving *perboiled* next to *parboiled* (from OF *parbouillir*). Hall (1942, 30) records [ˈpæɪbail] for *parboil* for the Smokies (cf. Diphthongs in Chapter 23 and Chapter 27 for the treatment of ME /oi/).

In Chapter 18 (section 4.1), we noted the lowering of ME /ɛr/ to [æɪ] in a number of words. On the other hand, the 17th-century New England records show examples of raising: /ar/ > /ɛr/. For instance, the Lunenburg records (Mass.) have *persels* [ˈpɛɪsəlz] (1740) for *parcels* (< Old French *parcele* [par.sɛl], late 14th c.) showing this shift from ME /ar/ > /æɪ/ > [ɛɪ]. The Easthampton records (NY) give *gerdiner* (1695) for “gardener” but also *peart* for “part” (1681), *ere* [ɛ:ɪ] for “are,” just as Franklin gives in it his RMS. Recall that Shorrocks (1998, 190) transcribes *garden* with a long [ˈgæ:ɪdn̩] but also with gives raised [ˈgɛ:ɪdn̩] (cf. below for more examples) showing contemporary examples of these forms.

In the section covering ME /ɛr/, we also discussed how it was subject to

lowering to [æ(:)ɪ]. Words such as *merchant* ~ *marchant*, *mercy* ~ *marcy* oscillated in English but also in French. We also have noted in Chapter 18 that [æ(:)ɪ] was considered “vulgar” in England while centralization was more acceptable. In America, however, it was the opposite and centralization was still viewed as “vulgar” as late as 1818 showing that, once again, London tended to lead the way in terms of phonetic innovation whereas America lagged behind, clinging to pronunciations that were formerly viewed as prestigious back in England.

The current traditional Massachusetts pronunciation of words like *shark*, *car* and *park*, etc. show an older, less lowered realization than in GA: [ʃa:k] [ˈka:] and [pa:k] (but [wɑ:] for “war”). Compare these with GA the low back [ɑ]: [ˈʃɑ:k], [kɑɪ], [paɪk] (but [wɔ:ɪ ~ wɒ:ɪ]).

Mazarin (2020) shows that *Square* words were pronounced [æ:ɪ] during the Type A and Type B phases and gradually raised to [ɛ:ɪ] in popular speech during the Type C phase (after 1650), but I would contend that [æ(:)ɪ] continued to be used in certain regional varieties and registers long afterwards, including by Franklin and the New England poets. The traditional account explains that this raised [ɛ:ɪ] pronunciation had become acceptable to “polite” speakers during the 18th century. The conservatism of Franklin’s speech is not particularly surprising, however, when one considers that he was born in 1706 in the remote North American town of Boston, a time when all the elders during his youth, born in the mid-17th century, still spoke varieties with mixed elements of Type B2 and C1 English.

Referring to Robinson (1617), Dobson speaks of the “inconsistency of the evidence” and adds that Bullokar (1580s), Daines (1640) and Hodges (1640s) provide contradictory indications “for they normally distinguished between ME /a:r/ and /ɛ:r/ and thus give evidence for [æ:] for ME long a, but in special circumstances give evidence of the identity of ME /a:r/ and /ɛ:r/, which depends on fronting of ME /a:/ to /ɛ:/...” (Dobson, 1968, 595).

In 18th-century colonial America, [æ:ɪ] probably remained the dominant pronunciation for *Square* words (< ME /a(:)r/), at least among the better educated elements of society. By the 1650s, words such as *bare*, *fare*, *hare*, *pare*, and *share* had gradually moved to [ɛ:r] falling together with lengthened ME /a/ although [æ:ɪ] lingered on for longer than is generally believed. This new [ɛ:ɪ] pronunciation (< ME /ar/) merged with the reflexes of ME /ɛ:/ in words like *tear*, *fear*, *seal*, *deal* ... In some cases, it was raised even further (following the GVS pattern of the *Meat* vowel /ɛ:/ > /i:/ as seen in Lowell’s *skeered* for “scared,” *skeercely* for “scarcely,” *cheer* for “chair,” etc. We have also seen that ME /ɛr/ <ea> was often lowered to [æ:ɪ] > [ɑ(:)ɪ ~ ɒ(:)ɪ] in multiple environments (*heart*, *hearth*, *heark*...) but this was certainly not the case in all English dialects, as we saw in Chapter 18.

3.5 Sequence 5: ME /w-/, /hw-/, /kw-/ + /a(:)/

To conclude this chapter, let us pause a moment to consider [w-]⁹ + [æ] + [nd]/[nt]. In 18th-century New England, the tendency was to retain the older [a ~ æ] pronunciations in “polite” pronunciation. Dwight, for instance, rhymes *wand* [wæ(:)nd] ~ *land* [læ(:)nd] at a time when [wɑ(:)nd ~ wɒ(:)nd] was certainly part of the early feature pool (see below). Once more, the lowered pronunciations were apparently considered less prestigious. Similarly, in his *Poor Richard’s Almanack*, Franklin rhymes *scant* [skæ(:)nt] with *want* [wæ(:)nt].

I know thy Fortune is but very *scant*;
But, be assur’d, I’ll ne’er see Dick in *Want*. (1739)

Another of Franklin’s examples is his rhyme of *wants* ~ *inhabitants* both with [æ].

Kind Nature suits each Clime with what it *wants*,
Sufficient to subsist th’ *Inhabitants*. (1748)

In cases where word-initial /w-/ <w>, /hw-/ <wh> and /kw-/ <qu> are followed by <ar>, the prestigious pronunciation during the 18th century was still /æ(:)ɪ/. Nevertheless, under the combined effects of the bilabial approximant /w-/ and r-colouring, [æ(:)] was gradually lowered to [a:ɪ] and backed to [wɑ:ɪ]. From there it was raised in some varieties to [wɒ:ɪ] and finally to [wɔ:ɪ ~ wɒ:ɪ].

Dobson (1968, 525) asserts that the first sign of lowering to [ɒ:ɪ] appears in Daines’ *Orthoepedia* (1640) citing the following examples: *ward*, *warm*, *swarm*, *warn*, *dwarf*, *warp*, *thwart*, *wharf*, *quart* and, very importantly for our discussion below, *war*.

In America, this process of lowering and backing can also be seen as early as the 17th century, which ties in nicely with Dobson’s appraisals here. The 17th-century Plymouth records (Mass.) yield examples such as *whorfe* [hwɔɪf ~ hwɔɪf] for “wharf” (Plymouth, 1691), *whorfs*, (Plymouth, 1699), *whorfage* (Dedham, 1705), *worned* [wɔɪn ~ wɔɪn] for “warned” (Groton, 1706) and *quarter* [kwɔɪtəɪ ~ kwɔɪtəɪ] for “quarter” (Plymouth, 1692) as well as *swomp(e)* [swɔmp] (Dedham, 1677, Plymouth, 1679), *swompy* [swɔmpi] (Plymouth, 1702). A final example is Wodkins for “Wadkins” (Dedham, 1679). As we shall see in Chapter 20, <or> spellings generally corresponded to [ɒɪ] and this is the value it is given in Franklin’s *Reformed Mode of Spelling* and in the poems of the New England poets.

This analysis agrees globally with Beal’s (1999, 128) who, also citing Dobson (1968, 524), gives Coles (1674) as having “a long, rounded vowel,” presumably

9 We shall see in Chapter 23 and Chapter 27 that orthographic <w> was qualitatively considered to be a very short [u] vowel by most 18th century orthoepists, although some expressed doubts such as Perry (1775) and Webster (1789) as to its exact nature before back vowels. For convenience sake, I have continued to give it a consonantal [w] value here (as it probably was pronounced in paritary contexts and in rapid speech).

[ɔ:] or [ɒ:], in *ward*, *dwarf*, *wharf* and a short /ɒ/ in *warm*, *swarm*, *warn*, *wart*, *quart*, *thwart* but /æ/ for *warp* and *warble*. Cooper (1685) has *ward*, *warden*, and *warm* with the long rounded [ɔ:]. She concludes by stating:

All these authorities are cited by Dobson, who writes: “The evidence clearly suggests that the rounded pronunciation, which began as a vulgarism . . . made its way into St.E. very slowly indeed. It was most common, and was first accepted in St.E., in the normally weakly stressed *was* and *what*. Unrounded forms apparently still survived in *wan*, *quality*, etc. in the late eighteenth century.” (Beal, 1999, 128, citing Dobson, 1957, 717)

The modern GA pronunciations for these words are thus very close to those of the 17th century recorded here. Buchanan (1762; quoted in Krapp, 1925, 58), also states that words such as *war*, *ward*, *warm*, etc. should be pronounced [ɒ:ɪ]. In contemporary RP, <w(h)ar-> is pronounced [wɔ:] (with loss of rhoticity) while, in GA, it appears to have retained the older [(h)wɒ:ɪ- ~ (h)wɔ:ɪ-]¹⁰ pronunciations. For some GA speakers, the vowel of *war*, *warn*, *ward*, *warm*... has been raised and rounded even further to > [(h)wɔ:ɪ-]...

And yet, despite the fact that the presence of initial [w-] + /a/ and post-vocalic /r/ in an environment such as /w + æ(:)ɪ + C(C)/ was clearly conducive to the lowering of /æ/, the New England poets, Franklin among them, appear to have still been using this older [æ:ɪ] pronunciation in many of these environments until the end of the 18th and early 19th centuries.

The late survival of this pronunciation is once again borne out by the English grammarian, Granville Sharp (1801, 13-17) who advocates the use of [æ:] not only in words such as *wash* [wæ:ʃ], *wasp* [wæ:sp] (cf. [wæsp] for Burn, 1786, in Beal's Appendix 3, 1999, 204) and *wrath* [ɹæ:θ] (as in GA today) but also *ward* [wæ:ɪd], *warp* [wæ:ɪp] and *quart* [kwæ:ɪt], etc. It is also clear that these conservative [æ:ɪ] pronunciations were maintained until the 20th century by some dialect speakers in England (cf. Shorrocks below).

3.5.1 Benjamin Franklin Sr.

In a poem composed in 1710 by Benjamin Franklin the Elder (which he dedicated to his young nephew Benjamin Jr., aged four), he condemns the evils of war.

Fair [fæ:ɪ] Citties Rich to Day, in plenty flow
War [wæ:ɪ] fills with *want* [wænt], Tomorrow, and [ænd] with woe.
 Ruin'd Estates, The Nurse [nɒ:ɪs ~ nɛ:ɪs?] of Vice [vɔ:ɪs], broke limbs and *scarts*
 [skæ:ɪts]
Are [æ:ɪ ~ ɛ:ɪ] the Effects of Desolating *Warrs* [wæ:ɪrɪz].

10 Once again, for practical reasons, I have not indicated the vocalic value [u] of <w> here (cf. Chapters 23 and 27 for discussion).

“War” stems historically from ME “werre” [wɛɪ(ə)]. While it is not entirely impossible that it had retained its original [wɛɪɪ] pronunciation in Northamptonshire and New England, it seems unlikely. Even though it would explain many, but not all, of the rhymes to be studied below, this idea is contradicted by a number of other factors and counterexamples.

As we have seen above, the phonetic range for words spelt <whar-> or <war> in vulgar New England English would have been realized in the vicinity of [ɒɪ ~ ɒ:ɪ ~ ɑɪ ~ ɑ:ɪ]. But this does not correspond to what we see in Benjamin Franklin Sr.’s poem which offers precious evidence about how he and his brother Josiah, Franklin’s father, would have pronounced words such as *fair*, *war*, *scarts* (i.e. “scars”) and *are*.

We have seen that *fair* and *are* normally have the value of [ɛ:ɪ ~ æ:ɪ], but what of *war* and *scarts*? After taking into consideration the numerous rhymes of the New England poets (cf. below), including Franklin Jr.’s, I have come to the conclusion that the Franklin family was still pronouncing “war” as [wæ(:)ɪ] and, in all probability “scarts” was rendered as [skæ(:)ɪ(t)z]. Franklin’s RMS supports this analysis, in which he transcribes *hard* and *far* as [hæɪd] and [fæɪ] (cf. Chapter 26).

Franklin the Elder also appears to match the first words of the first two lines, *fair* and *war*. *Fair* is normally thought to have been realized as [fɛ:ɪ ~ fæ:ɪ] in New England (see Krapp’s opinion on the dual pronunciation of these words in the conclusion to this chapter),

We have seen above that the lowered pronunciations were considered vulgarisms and it is probable, considering their high level of literacy, that Franklin’s family was sensitive to this. Another interpretation is that these [æɪ] realizations may represent a case of hypercorrection on the part of linguistically insecure speakers of humble origin.

For reasons of assonance, note that in the second line, *war* [wæɪ] is followed by *want*, which we have already seen was still pronounced [wænt] by Franklin Jr. We can assume that Josiah and, perhaps Franklin Jr. did the same. Note that *want* is followed directly by *and* [ænd].

On the other hand, the final line is introduced by *are* while the last word of the same line is *warrs*. In his 1768 reform, Franklin transcribes “are” as **er** or **eer** clearly indicating [ɛ(:)ɪ] pronunciation in the RMS (cf. the raising of ME /ar/ > [ɛɪ]). Nevertheless, one would expect [æɪ] for “are” in this specific context, which falls within the realm of the phonetic range outlined previously. For all these reasons, *warrs* ~ *scarts* would indeed seem to have been realized with [æɪ].

Benjamin Franklin Jr. published another poem (on the freedom of the press) which is published in *Poor Richard’s Almanack* (1757), in which he rhymes “war” and “air.” Given the various analyses presented above, it is impossible

to tell for certain whether this is a perfect or approximate rhyme with slight distinctions of aperture of the vowel coming into play. Nevertheless, if it is a perfect rhyme, then we could imagine that <air>, <are>, <ere> in these examples are also pronounced [æ:ɪ] rather than the expected [ɛ:ɪ].

Caesar into his Mother's Bosom *bare*
Fire, Sword, and all the Ills of civil *War*: (1739)

//sɛ:zæɪ ɪntə hɪs 'mʌðəɪz 'bɒzəm 'bæ:ɪ
'fɪɪ, 'swɒɪd, ænd 'bɪl ðɛ ɪlz ɒv 'sɪvɪl 'wæ:ɪ//

Her offspring, skill'd in Logic *War*,
Truth's Banner wav'd in open *Air*; (1757)

//hɛɪ 'ɒfspɪɪŋ 'ski:ld ɪn 'lɒdʒɪk 'wæ:ɪ/
'tɹʌθs 'bænəɪ 'we:vd ɪn 'ɒpən¹¹ 'æ:ɪ //

□

Recall that Burton cites William Barnes as pronouncing <air> as [æɪɪ] in the mid-19th century, which give a boost to this [æ:ɪ] hypothesis.

3.5.2 New England Poets

The best indicator that this front /æ:r/ pronunciation was not only possible but commonplace in 18th-century New England is the number of times *war* is rhymed by New England poets with <air>, <are> and <ear> words. Barlow (1754-1812) rhymes *war* ~ *air* more than sixteen times in his *Columbiad* (1807) as well as with other <air> words: *war* ~ *despair*; *war* ~ *repair* (cf. *air* diphthongs at the end of Chapter 24) suggesting that these are all, once again, perfect rhymes.

Given that [æ] is frequently raised to [ɛ] in New England (cf. Franklin's rhymes of *rather*, *racking*, *have*, *has*, etc., all with [æ]), could this mean that <war> was raised back to its original position, i.e. [wɛ:ɪ]? I mentioned this possibility above. Neither is it impossible that that it represents lowered [wa:ɪz] ~ [ska:ɪz] and these variants certainly existed, but for the sociolinguistic reasons stated above, as well questions of assonance, I would stand by the [æ:ɪ] hypothesis.

As indicated for Franklin above, Barlow's rhymes *war* and <are> words are regularly encountered: *war* ~ *spare* (3 times), *war* ~ *blare* (3 times), *war* ~ *glare* (6 times), *war* ~ *care* (3 times), *war* ~ *bare* (once), *war* ~ *dare* (once) and *war* ~ *prepare* (6 times) as well as *war* ~ *bear* (once). Barlow also rhymes *star* [stæ:ɪ] ~ *air* [æ:ɪ] and *star* [stæ:ɪ] ~ *war* [wæ:ɪ] (twice) as well as *star* [stæ:ɪ] ~ *afar* [ə'fæ:ɪ].¹²

11 *Open* ['ɒpən] appears in rhymes with words pronounced [ʌ] possibly suggesting ['ʌpən] (Cf. "New England short o").

12 Wright (1905, 618) records only one example of *star* [stɛəɪ] for Shropshire (about eighty miles from Northamptonshire), which suggests that there may have been occasional [ɛ:ɪ ~

Finally, he rhymes *war* ~ *rear* as well as *war* ~ *bear* and *war* ~ *there*, as we have seen elsewhere, *rear* was borrowed with the Old French pronunciation [rɛ:r] (OF *rere*, circa. 1300).¹³

J. B. Ladd (1764-1786), a Rhode Islander, also rhymes *war* [wæ:ɪ] ~ *air* [æ:ɪ] and *war* ~ *declare* [dɛ'klæ:ɪ] while *bard* rhymes with *reward* presumably pronounced [bæ:ɪd] ~ [rɛ'wæ:ɪd], recalling Duponceau's pronunciation of *bard* with [æ:ɪ] in Pennsylvania (Duponceau, 1818, 252), which he matched with *bird*, realized by him as [bæ:ɪd].

John Trumbull (1750-1831), a Connecticut man, rhymes *star* [stæ:ɪ] ~ *there* [ðæ:ɪ] (probably not [ðɛ:ɪ] in this case), *guard* [gæ:ɪd] ~ *prepar'd* [pre'pæ:ɪd], *tar* [tæ:ɪ] ~ *hair* [hæ:ɪ] as well as *alarming* [ə'læ:(:ɪ)mɪn] ~ *chairman* [tʃæ:(:ɪ)mən]. Perhaps more difficult to discern are rhymes involving *march* [mæ:(:ɪ)tʃ] ~ *search* [sæ:(:ɪ)tʃ] ([sɛ:(:ɪ)tʃ] ~ [mɛ:(:ɪ)tʃ]?), *are* [æ:ɪ ~ ɛ:ɪ]¹⁴ ~ *fair* [fæ:ɪ ~ fɛ:ɪ]?, *air* [æ:ɪ ~ ɛ:ɪ] ~ *care* [kæ:ɪ ~ kɛ:ɪ]?, *verse* [væ:ɪs] ~ *farse* [fæ:ɪs]...

He also rhymes *warm* [wæ:ɪm] with *charm* [tʃæ:ɪm] as well as with *arm* [æ:ɪm], *farm* [fæ:ɪm], *harm* [hæ:ɪm] while *swarms* [swæ:ɪmz] rhymes with *arms* [æ:ɪmz] and *regard* [ɪɛ'gæ:ɪd] with *reward* [rɛ'wæ:ɪd].¹⁵

This also recalls Duponceau's description of "there," "stairs," etc. being pronounced *thahr*; *stahrs* in Virginia, presumably [æ:ɪ ~ a:ɪ ~ ɑ:ɪ] (Duponceau, 1818, 253). The more general conclusion is inescapable. Words such as *bear* and *bare* or *here*, *hear* and *hair* were probably standing in sociolinguistically-determined, free variation of [æ:ɪ ~ ɛ:ɪ] with shades of variations between these depending on the speaker's social status, age and regional origin.

3.5.3 <are> and <ere> Rhymes

Franklin also offers a rhyme between *were* ~ *fare* having the same realization as [ɛ:ɪ ~ æ:ɪ] of *there*. Note that Grandgent (1899, 239) signals the existence of <war> spellings in Massachusetts for *were* as did Orbeck (1927) for the 17th century.

All may reflect how *light*, how *well* they *were* [wɛ:ɪ]
When plain and simple was *their* [ðɛ:ɪ] *cheerful* [tʃɛ:ɪfəl] *Fare* [fɛ:ɪ]. (1756)

Once again, the alliteration of *were* [wɛ:ɪ ~ wæ:ɪ], *their* [ðɛ:ɪ ~ ðæ:ɪ], *cheerful* [tʃɛ:ɪfəl ~ tʃæ:ɪfəl], *fare* [fɛ:ɪ ~ fæ:ɪ] would seem to support this suggestion. Recall

ɛ:ɪ] pronunciations of "war" in the colonies (in Franklin's family?), but these must have been marginal. Wright cites [stæ:ɪ] as the general pronunciation for Scotland, but gives no examples for England. "War" is not included in his glossary.

13 It was borrowed into Breton with this same [rɛ:r ~ ɛ:r] pronunciation, but also with variants in [ɜæ:ə] and [ɜa:ə] in areas surrounding Fouesnant in southern Finistère.

14 Franklin proposes that [ɛ:(:ɪ)] should be the pronunciation of "are" (cf. Chapters 9 and 26).

15 Trumbull, 1820. Despite the late publication date, Krapp indicates that these poems were written before the American Revolution (Krapp, 1925, 383).

too that, in his orthographic reform, Franklin confuses three transcriptions of “there” in his RMS spelling it *ðer*, *ðeer* and *ðaer*. I have replaced Franklin’s character for IPA /ð/ on account of my inability to reproduce another of his h-like characters (cf. Chapter 25 for more on this). I interpret this to reflect his hesitation between [ðɛ:ɪ] and [ðæ:ɪ] (Franklin, 1779). Further support is supplied by more recent dialectal evidence. For instance, we have already noted that Barnes (1844) pronounced *air* [æiɪ ~ æə] in his Dorset poems. Based on what we have seen, this pronunciation would correspond to a Type B realization that was popular from roughly 1550-1650.

The hypothesis favouring [æ:ɪ] in the above rhymes is bolstered to some degree by Hall’s study of the Smokies. He supports the idea that <air> words may indeed have been pronounced [æ:ə] (Hall’s transcription) in New England in early America. He records the following examples: *hair* [hæ:ə], *air* [æ:ə], etc. Examples of centralization in such words are also commonplace: *fair* [fə], *chair* [tʃə], *their* [ðə], *care* [kə], etc. This implies that such competing pronunciations were widespread in the vernacular as early as the 17th century throughout the colonies, both North and South (Hall, 1942, 25). Shorrocks (1998, 193) cites similar evidence for Lancashire alongside centralized pronunciations: *dare* [dæ:ɪ]¹⁶ or [dø:], *scared* [skæ:ɪd] or [skø:d].

Any doubts about the possibility that words such as *war*, *star* and *tar* could possibly have been realized with [æ:ɪ] in Franklin’s lifetime are quickly erased when we consider examples documented only two decades ago by Shorrocks (1998, 192) in Bolton, Lancashire. I (like Whithall, 1935, cf. Chapter 22), have come to the conclusion that such Lancashire pronunciations were heard far more widely two hundred years ago.

war	[wæ:(ɪ)]
warm	[wæ:(ɪ)m]
warning	[ˈwæ:(ɪ)nm]
warp	[wæ(ɪ)p]
quart	[kwæ(ɪ)t]
thwart	[θwæ(ɪ)t]

16 I have recorded [a ˈdæ:nt du ˈðat] “I daren’t do that” in Deane, Lancs. while Polly Johnson, Wise Co., Virginia, pronounces “daren’t” in the traditional ballad “Massie Groves” as [ˈdæ:ɪsnt] in the line “I’m dursnt for my life” (cf. Shorrocks’ pronunciation of *daren’t* 1998). However, the pronunciation no longer appears to be productive for the singer who interprets it to mean “fearful.”

He gives other examples such as:

tar	[tæ:(ɪ)]
heart	[æ:(ɪ)t ~ jæ:(ɪ)t] ¹⁷
garden	[ˈgæ:(ɪ)dɪn ~ ˈgɛ:(ɪ)dɪn]
far	[fæ:(ɪ)]
bar	[bæ:(ɪ)]
barn	[bæ:(ɪ)n]
darn	[dæ:(ɪ)n]
start	[stæ:(ɪ)t]
market	[ˈmæ:(ɪ)kɪt]
arse	[æ:ɪs ~ æ:s]
parliament	[ˈpæ:(ɪ)ləmənt]

These pronunciations were obviously far more widespread in England during the 18th and 19th centuries (Shorrocks, 1998, 189-190) and were common to areas of the Midlands, southern and eastern England. Consider in passing, Shorrocks' and the SED's transcriptions of *arse* as [æ:s] (i.e. formerly [æ:ɪs] with r-loss and compensatory lengthening), in Gloucestershire and Herefordshire, a pronunciation commonly associated with American English today. It is pronounced [a:s] in Staffordshire, Cheshire, Derbyshire and Shropshire. These realizations clearly lingered on throughout the 18th-century in colonial New England and America and are additional signs of continuity between the American and English vernaculars.

3.5.4 <ere>, <ear>, <are> Spellings: /æɪ/ or /ɛɪ/?

To repeat, Krapp (1925, 109) concludes that [æɪ] and [ɛɪ] realizations in New England were both common during the 18th century.

Many of the rimes of the New England poets indicate not only that modern [ɛ:] was pronounced as [æ:], the preliminary stage to what later became Southern and Northern dialectal [ɑ:] in *there*, *bear*, *bare*, etc. but that even some words which have [i:] in present English, for example, *ear*, *year*, were formerly pronounced with a very open vowel [ɛ:] or [æ:].

¹⁷ By this I mean in situations where speakers receive no formal schooling and live their lives in sociolinguistic situations where basilectal varieties dominate.

Note that all Krapp's examples include <ear>, <are> and <ere> and his conclusion appears to confirm much of the evidence obtained from the diverse sources presented here. At the same time, it places the data within a useful temporal and geolinguistic framework. More importantly, it provides important clues about how Franklin's would have pronounced such words himself.

The evidence for this conclusion is abundant and provides crucial information that will serve to identify the discrepancies with the model of pronunciation Franklin proposed for his 1768 orthographic reform (published in 1779).

3.5.5 Problem Cases

Among the potential "imperfect" rhymes I identified in Chapter 15 are Dwight's rhymes of *desert* ~ *heart* (GA [dɛzəɪt] ~ [hɑɪt]) and *part* ~ *desert* (GA [pɑɪt] ~ [dɛzəɪt]) in his *Conquest of Canaan*. In his *Poor Richard's Almanack*, 1745, Franklin also rhymes *heart* ~ *desert* which would imply that the two poets share the same pronunciation of these words. As pointed out by Duponceau (1818, 292), they both probably pronounced *heart* [hæɪt]. But, considering the matching element is *desert*, how do we rationalize this?

These matches seem peculiar to a Modern English or American ear until we realize that the tonic stress in *desert* was most likely still on the final syllable during the 18th century, just as in French [dɛ,zɛʁ], from which it was borrowed. If we are dealing with a perfect rhyme, it was either [dɛ'zɛɪt ~ 'dɛ,zɛɪt ~ hɛɪt], which may have been the most prestigious rhyme sociolinguistically, or [dɛ'zæɪt ~ 'dɛ,zæɪt ~ hæɪt] which would have been acceptable in American (Duponceau, 1818) but considered vulgar in London according to Duchet and Trapoteau (2019). Likewise, Dwight's rhyme of *part* ~ *desert* and *desert* ~ *heart* probably represent [pæɪt ~ dɛ'zæɪt ~ 'dɛ,zæɪt] and [dɛ'zæɪt ~ 'dɛ,zæɪt ~ hæɪt] respectively. Considering that orthoepists in both England and America were supporting the pronunciation of <er> and <ear> as [ɛɪ] and given Dwight's multiple, repetitive rhymes of *heart* ~ *part* (four times), *heart* ~ *art*, *heart* ~ *impart*, *heart* ~ *dart*, *heart* ~ *smart*, etc. in his *Greenfield Hill*, the weight of the evidence for both examples would seem, once again, to lean in favour of [æɪɪt].

3.5.6 Signs of Lowering

Signs of the lowering of *Square* and *Start* words can be observed in Dwight's *Greenfield Hill* where the overwhelming majority of his rhymes with *war*¹⁸ occur

18 The frequency of these rhymes with "war" is linked to the themes of the poem involving the wars against the Native Americans and the British during the Revolution.

only with <ar> words. *War* is rhymed multiple times with *car* as well as with *mar*, *afar*, *bar*, *far*, *unbars* and so on. I only found one example of *war* rhyming with <are> or <air> rhyme: *war* ~ *care*. Even more indicative of lowering, Dwight pairs *war* [wɑ:ɪ] ~ *abhor* [ab'hɑ:ɪ ~ ab'hɒ:ɪ]. If so, this implies that his rhymes of *war* ~ *mar*, *war* ~ *afar*, *war* ~ *bar*, etc. may also have shared this lowered [æ:ɪ] pronunciation. We have seen above that the [ɑ:ɪ ~ ɒ:ɪ] realization of <or> words is the one advocated by Franklin in his RMS. For practical purposes, I indicate Dwight's rhymes of <or> as with lowered [ɒ:ɪ].

Dwight also gives lowered pronunciations of *warm* [wɒ:ɪm] ~ *form* [fɒ:ɪm] (three times), *warm* [wɒ:ɪm] ~ *inform* [ɪn'fɒ:ɪm], *warm* [wɒ:ɪm] ~ *storm* [stɒ:ɪm] which all appear to be perfect rhymes. These lowered pronunciations (i.e. [ɒ:ɪ]) correspond globally to the evidence presented by Beal for both 17th- and 18th-century England (Beal, 1999, 128).

On the other hand, I have some doubts about his realizations of rhymes of <war-> and <ar> words. We have seen previously that <ar> words were pronounced [æ:ɪ] or with lowering [ɑ:ɪ ~ ɑ:ɪ ~ ɒ:ɪ]. The phonetic range for words spelt <war-> would have thus seem to have been pronounced [wæ:ɪ ~ wɑ:ɪ ~ wɑ:ɪ ~ wɒ:ɪ ~ wɒ:ɪ] (cf. introduction to Sequence 5). If the rhymes were intended to be perfect, they would have been most likely realized with [ɒ:ɪ]: *reward* [ɹi'wɒ:ɪd] ~ *guard* [gɒ:ɪd], *reward* [ɹi'wɒ:ɪd] ~ *regard* [ɹi'gɒ:ɪd], *warm* [wɑ:ɪm] ~ *charm* [tʃɒ:ɪm], *warm'd* [wɒ:ɪm] ~ *alarm'd* [a'lb:ɪmd], *swarms* [swɒ:ɪm] ~ *alarms* [a'lb:ɪmz] and so on.

Nevertheless, the current traditional eastern Massachusetts treatment of these rhymes would oppose [ɑ:] ~ [ɑ:]: *reward* [ɹi'wɑ:d] ~ *regard* [ɹi'gɑ:d], *swarms* [swɑ:mz] ~ *alarms* [ə'la:mz], *warm* [wɑ:m] ~ *charm* [tʃɑ:m]. Note in passing that this modern pronunciation of *regard*, *alarms* and *charm* with [ɑ:] are, in fact, older diachronically than the lowered realizations given for Dwight in the preceding paragraph. After [w-] + [æ] + ([ɪ]) + C, however, [æ:ɪ] was lowered to [ɑ:ɪ] in Massachusetts forming perfect rhymes: *warm* [wɑ:m] ~ *storm* [stɑ:m], *warm* [wɑ:m] ~ *inform* [ɪn'fɑ:m].

This evidence suggests that Dwight's pronunciations of these lowered <ar> words were proportionately greater than for his other New England colleagues. A more complete study of his poetry would be needed to determine the degree to which this may or may not be true.

We have already considered Franklin's rhyme of *quarter* ~ *shorter* in his 1719 poem about the death of Teach the pirate. As stated previously, the lyrics were composed for a popular audience who already would have had lowered [ɑ:ɪ ~ ɒ:ɪ] pronunciations ("quarter" *quorter* ['kwɑ:ɪtəɪ] in the 17th-century Plymouth records). If so, Dwight must have shared a lowered realization close to this to allow for similar rhymes. For the reasons just expressed, Dwight's

innovative, lowered realization of <ar> implies the formerly stigmatized pronunciation was gradually gaining acceptance during the course of the late 18th and early 19th century.

Wright (1905, 319) gives low-back [ba:ɪ] as the pronunciation of *bare* for Norfolk (a region from which a large number of Puritans immigrated to Massachusetts) and [baəɪ] for Lancashire, Staffordshire and Shropshire. Whether this lowering dates to EME or whether it is a more recent secondary development is difficult to prove.

Conclusion

So, what are we to make of these variant pronunciations and problematic rhymes? Once again, Krapp provides a logical explanation for these discrepancies between the conservative and innovative 18th-century pronunciations that we have examined in the preceding sections. He writes:

The rimes of the Connecticut poets of the eighteenth century indicate clearly a pronunciation with [æ] for this period. One might question whether these rimes were not merely traditional rimes of eighteenth-century verse, *but they are too numerous and too general to be taken as anything other than reflections of spoken usage, at least of New England speech, at that time* (my italics). Similar rimes occur, though sporadically, in the verse of early nineteenth century; but these rimes by this time were probably only occasional old-fashioned pronunciations which had persisted after the tendency toward the rounding of a [æ] preceded by w had become general. Even among the poets of the eighteenth century, one finds here and there a rime which indicates a rounded vowel for a after w, though these rimes are very much less numerous than those which call for [æ]. (Krapp, 1925, 83)

If so, this [æ(:)ɪ] pronunciation corresponds to the stage defined by Mazarin as belonging to the Type A (1500-1650) and Type B stages (1550-1675). In our discussion of Franklin's influence on Noah Webster (Chapters 29-30) we will see that this point is of special relevance to our story, namely, a possible sociolinguistic corollary to which I have already alluded on several occasions. In the context of the data presented in Sequence 5, for instance, we have concluded that in the everyday New England paritary register, innovative tendencies involving the lowering of [(h)w + æ + C(C)] to [(h)w + ɒ:/ɑ: + C(C)] were at work. Proof of this is revealed in the 17th-century Plymouth town records and evidence from Daines (1640), Coles (1674) Cooper (1685) showing that this must have been current among the common people. These lowered realizations, however, were stigmatized by prescriptivists who strived to

promote the older traditional [æ:ɪ] pronunciations.

On the eve of the Romantic Movement, it is not impossible that, in the environments discussed above, the preservation of [æ(:)ɪ] in poetry, rather than the lowered variant, was part of a conscious attempt to preserve what they imagined to be an older and “untainted” disparitary register state of English. We have seen that both Franklin and Webster openly expressed that this superior literary and linguistic period for England preceded 1727 (cf. Chapters 14, 29, 30) and that the language had begun to “degenerate” after this time. Their opinions differed, however, on the reasons for this.

Now we shall turn to our attention to the study of the back vowels, diphthongs and consonants during these same periods. The evidence will reveal the same kinds of variant forms which inevitably formed the feature pool of the colonial population of North America.

20. High Back Vowels: ME /u:/, ME /u/

Introduction

In Chapters 16 through 19, we observed the constant raising, lowering, lengthening, shortening and diphthongization of cardinal front vowels which were and still are prompted by continuously evolving articulatory factors common to all languages, all of which are also subject to internal sociolinguistic and geolinguistic factors. We have seen how these pressures are of different intensity depending on the nature of the idiom and the institution in which it is used (cf. Chapters 10-12, 14). In this respect, although the GVS has been essential to understand the development of English phonology, we have also seen that there are serious drawbacks to relying solely on this conceptual tool to understand such a complicated diachronic process. This is why the evidence provided by English orthoepists between the 16th and 18th centuries, the 17th-century American town records, the New England poets as well as a broad array of English and American supporting dialectal data, offers a useful holistic vision of English language evolution. In this sense we see how certain varieties have evolved in surprisingly different and unexpected directions. For instance, 17th- and 18th-century American New England, Midland and southern koines, both paritary and disparitary, once shared many common features that are no longer represented in phonological system of their normalized GA descendant nor, for that matter, in that of New England English.

Importantly, despite the vast cultural differences between Britain and America and a two-hundred-and-fifty-year gap in regular linguistic exchanges since the Revolution, the modern varieties, both standard and even non-standard, are, on the whole, remarkably similar from a phonological standpoint. Furthermore, we also see that a considerable number of phonetic innovations that were once considered “vulgar” have, time after time, often generations or even centuries later, percolated up to the surface and finally been accepted by socially prominent “polite” speakers. This will become apparent in the tables provided in the conclusion to Chapter 24 where I have classified innovative features, that are often initially stigmatized, and conservative features, that were once prestigious. These distinctions are generally visible within the 17th-

and 18th-century phonetic ranges that have been identified for each of Wells' key words.

In addition, we discover that the orthoepists did not always agree on what they considered vulgar or polite. What they describe as vulgar is especially valuable in distinguishing what is often a phonetic innovation and a conservatism. Once again, such judgments have always depended on the ever-changing sociolinguistic nature of the idioms and institutions in which they are used.

The discussion on back vowels covers Chapters 20 through 22 and is broken down as follows:

- Chapter 20 focuses on the development of ME /u:/ and ME short /u/ as well as the treatment of /u(:)/ + /r/. We shall discuss what I have identified as “New England short u ([ʊ]) which will be studied in conjunction with New England short o (Chapter 21 and Chapter 22).
- Chapter 21, exactly as in Chapter 17, begins with a special overview entitled “Principles and Obstacles.” The objective here is to examine some of the difficulties encountered in interpreting the quality and quantity of the high-mid, low-mid and low back reflexes of ME /o:/ and ME /ɔ:/: [ɔ:], [ɒ:], [ɔ:], [ɒ:] and [ɑ:]. Like mid front vowels, and their mid and low back equivalents, occasional differences of interpretation have arisen since the 19th century which blur the precise quality and quantity of these IPA symbols, particularly the distinctions between [ɔ], [ɒ] and [ɑ] (cf. Wells, 1990, 2005 and Roach 2012 on this aspect of American English).
- Chapter 22 delves into a pronunciation which is sometimes called New England short o, a slightly centralized mid back vowel [ʊ] that was discussed in Chapter 20 (cf. New England short u) and Chapter 21. Because of its significance to our interpretation of Franklin's *Reformed Mode of Spelling*, this analysis is one of the most challenging of this entire book, particularly with regard to solving riddle surrounding Franklin's “imperfect rhymes” identified in Chapter 15.
- Chapter 23 covers the history of English and American diphthongs as well as the consonantal system. The discussion on the latter is fairly restricted because of their relative resistance to phonetic shifts. This is why I have concentrated on some of the fringe pronunciations that were certainly in the colonial feature pool, but which have since disappeared. A special concentration has been placed on the New England feature pool and koine, both paritary and disparitary, that has developed since the founder generation period.
- Finally, Chapter 24 presents a summary of the major observations and discoveries observed in Part III. This sets the stage for a full-fledged

discussion of Franklin's RMS (Part IV). As mentioned above, the feature pools for each of Wells' key words have been identified as either innovative or conservative.

1. High Back Vowels (ME /u:/ and ME /u/)

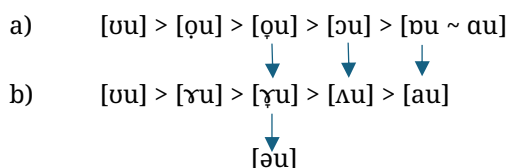
1.1 Some Models for Language Change, ME /u:/ > /au/

In the same way that high front ME /i:/ was diphthongized to [iɪ] > [ɛi] > [ɛi] > [ɛi] > [æi] > [ai] alongside a parallel movement of centralization to [əi ~ ʁi ~ ʌi], back high ME /u:/ followed a similar course which I outline below. However, just as with the evolution of ME /i:/, there are disagreements among linguists regarding the precise route taken by ME /u:/ > RP/GA /au/.

During the earliest phase of the GVS, my view is that ME /u:/ was mildly diphthongized to [ʊu:], possibly as early as the late ME period. Dobson (1968, 683-686) sees ME /u:/ evolving to [əu] by the end of the 16th century and “beyond any doubt” being pronounced [ʌu] by Wallis, Wilkins and Cooper. He adds that from [ʌu] the final transition to PresE /au/ was “slight and easy” (ibid., 686).

Dobson may be right in identifying [ʌu] as the stage reached by ME /u:/ during the 18th century. As he explains, the shift from [ʌu] to [au] would indeed have been “slight and easy.” Nevertheless, my interpretation is that a few steps may have been omitted in this shift. I propose two possible paths of development. Obviously, all such models must be viewed as simplifications of reality when considering the ongoing sound changes that were occurring at all levels of society in the largely semi-literate/illiterate societies we have been dealing with.

The first path is via the more commonly accepted route and the second via a parallel but slightly centralized track. One proposal does not necessarily cancel out the other.



Of course, the odd element in this particular scheme is centralized [əu]. Dobson and Mazarin propose different analyses, with Dobson (1968) confidently proclaiming that Wallis, Wilkins and Cooper pronounced this reflex of ME /u:/ as [ʌu] while Mazarin suggests that Wilkins (1668) and Cooper (1680) pronounced it with a centralized [ɣi] realization. If so, I would propose a slightly lower [ɣu] in this case. Recall that Isaac Newton, a native of Lincolnshire (1661) described

this diphthong as resembling French *aou* [au]. Finally, Lass (1999) opted for [ɔu] as the precedent before reaching [ʌu] (cf. a) above). I have opted in favour of the slightly centralized b) route. Recall that Lass considers that Hodges was the first observer to describe a centralized [əu] in 1644. This leaves us with a collection of 17th-century southern English diphthongs that are relatively similar: [ʌu ~ əu ~ ʔu ~ ɔu] alongside Newton's "northern" [au]. The path toward centralization here strongly resembles what we observed for *Price* words in Chapter 16. Where does this leave us?

If Wilkins' ʏ character truly had the value of [ʏ], as proposed by Mazarin, then we see a clear concordance between [ʏi] and [ʏu] in Wilkins' transcriptions of the Apostles' Creed which strongly suggests that [əu] was not universal.

Secondly, this scheme seems to be in line with Wells' model which clearly has ME /u/ and ME /ɔ(:)/ (i.e. *Cut* and *Blood* words) reaching [ʏ] before [ʌ]. We shall see that this is also the argument Grandgent proposes for 19th-century Massachusetts (but not Connecticut). As we can see from the evolutionary path followed by ME /u:/, fully centralized [əu] could have developed from any of the three diphthongs in the scheme proposed above, the most likely candidate being [ʌu]. However, it would have been a secondary development as suggested by Lass (1999).

The fact is that all these variant pronunciations seem to have been in competition during the 17th century in both England and colonial America, that is, [ɔu ~ ʔu ~ ʌu/əu ~ au] with [ɔu] and [ʔu] having older histories. Again, this fits quite nicely with the options proposed in a) and b) above.

If we opt for route a), we could easily say that [ɔu] was lowered to [ɒu], corresponding precisely to Franklin's 1768 *aa***u** RMS manuscript transcription, or that [ɔu] was centralized to [ʌu], as presented in proposition b). From there, as Dobson argues, it would have travelled on to [au], probably via [əu]. Once [au] was reached, the onset was raised to [æu] and further upward to [ɛu], as we have seen for large areas of the Northeast Midlands of England and all of the North American colonies (cf. Krapp, 1925, cf. Chapter 15 and Chapter 23).

The advantage of option b), however, is that the move downward is more direct, following a slightly centralized path and culminating directly with [ʌi]. From there it could easily have moved in various directions: [ʌi] > [ɛu] > [au] (as propose by Dobson) with later raising to [æu] > [ɛu] (typical of the Northeast Midlands and the American colonies, Krapp 1925)... Eventually, in the Northwest Midlands, the second element of the diphthong was weakened as in [mæəθ] and [mæəθ], the latter being common in Appalachia today. We saw that [ɛə] and [æə] would have been monophthongized in parts of Derbyshire, Cheshire and Lancashire to [mɛ:θ] and [mæ:θ]. The latter appears to be a very recent innovation.

The point is that many variants of these diphthongized pronunciations

existed in the colonial period and many can still be heard in different varieties in Britain and North America today, once again, as argued by Ihalainen (1994).

To repeat, “either/or” analyses are invalid when considering the development of English varieties holistically. It is important to keep in mind that standard RP English is only one of many varieties in a highly complex equation of language change. Rather, we should be trying to delve into what was an infinitely complicated and fuzzy diachronic history with multiple dimensions that ultimately reach right down to the idiolects of speakers at all levels of society and across all dialect regions of Britain and America. This is quite a frightening and daunting prospect for any linguist.

The question is how all this fits into the chronological development of ME /u:/. We saw in Chapters 13 and 16 that Mazarin (2020) proposed that Wilkins’ and Cooper’s high front onset vowel was realized as [ɿ] (< ME /i:/. In terms of symmetry, if a backed equivalent existed at the time, it would thus have been [ɯ] and this is precisely what I have concluded below. Mazarin’s identification of [ɿ] as a central player in the early history of back vowels, in particular *Strut* vowels, ties in well with this analysis. This will become more apparent shortly. Furthermore, his interpretation corresponds to the conclusion I came to when studying the quality of Grandgent’s description of New England short o which I also identified as a marginally centralized, albeit slightly lower-mid back [ɤ]. More on this later.

Dobson was convinced that Wallis, Wilkins and Cooper pronounced <ou> as [Λu]. In Chapter 13, we saw that Wilkins’ ʏ character was identical to the one Franklin adopted in his RMS (which I also had initially interpreted as [Λu]).¹ Mazarin (2020) concluded that Wilkins’ ʏ was in fact [ɿ]. I agree with this assessment but distinguish between two variants of this vowel [ɿ ~ ʏ] (more on this below). This identification also ties in well temporally with Wells’ observations on the evolution of ME /u/ which he believes was lowered to [ɿ] on its journey to [Λ] (in GA/RP). This is not at all the same story in large parts of England where this shift to [Λ] never occurred at all, particularly in the North. As mentioned in a footnote above, this was also the case for Massachusetts (cf. Chapters 21 and 22).

In Chapter 13 (Figure 13.6), I provided a phonetic transcription of the Apostles’ Creed in Wilkins’ phonetic script which I transcribed in the IPA. Likewise, Mazarin (2020) transcribed the Lord’s Prayer in Hart’s, Hodges’ and Lodwick’s alphabets. Unfortunately, only one *Mouth* word, “our,” came up in the four prayers and three different transcriptions were provided. Hart (1570)

1 I later changed my view on this point after taking into account Grandgent’s insistence that the [Λ] vowel was not heard in Massachusetts in the 19th century (nor in the 18th!). J. R. Lowell, a native of Boston, born in 1819, claimed he had never heard it either. I shall come back to this in Chapter 22.

[ɔu], Hodges (1644) [au] (or [ɔu?]), Wilkins (1668) [ɹu] and Lodwick (1686) [ɔu]... Separated by 116 years, Mazarin has Hart and Lodwick (a Dutchman) pronouncing “our” in the same way. Hodges, a Londoner, pronounces it in a very similar way to Franklin’s *aaur* [ɔu] (RMS).² [ɔu] is only a step away from [ʌu], which is not represented in Mazarin’s transcriptions. If <ɥ> truly represents [ɹ] for Wilkins, as it would seem, his [ɹu] is very interesting in the sense that it corresponds well to its [ɹi] reflex of ME /i:/ (Chapter 16). Regardless, the onsets [ɔ ~ ʌ ~ ɹ] (or more possibly [ɹ]) are all located within the same small pocket. Indeed, [ɔu], [ʌu] and [ɹu] are only separated by a hair’s width. This [ɹu] hypothesis will become increasingly relevant in the discussion below and in Chapter 23.

Based on the evidence yielded in the four town registers, Orbeck (1927) demonstrated long ago that the dominant pronunciation of ME /i:/ in 17th century Massachusetts was indeed [ei] (not [əi]). If high back vowels evolved symmetrically along the same lines as the high front vowels, one would expect a path via [ɔu] > [ɔu] or [ɹu] > [ʌu], which is what we observe in option a) and b) above. Orbeck proposes an earlier [ɔu ~ ɔu] pronunciation that would have been the dominant form in 17th-century Massachusetts. As he admits, however, the evidence is “far from conclusive” (ibid., 52) and “It is therefore difficult to decide in any given case just what orthographic <ou> implies.” His point is well taken and, in keeping with the variationist approach adopted in this book, multiple variables were certainly in competition. Here again, [ɔu ~ ɔu] are very slightly backed variants of centralized [ɹu ~ ɹu] (see a and b above) and could even have been considered as allophones depending on the dialectal system.

Dobson (1968) demonstrates that the last stage of the shift from ME /u:/ > GA/RP /au/ had already been reached in some regions of England as early as the 16th and 17th centuries, as can be seen by Isaac Newton’s identification of it with French *aou* [au] around 1661. If Dobson’s model is correct, this means that [ʌu] would have had to have been reached at some point during the late (?) 1500s. This would push the [ɔu] and [ɔu] stages back considerably. As a Lincolnshire man, Newton’s accent was perceived to be “northern.” Note that many of the clergy to Massachusetts were also from Lincolnshire (cf. Chapter 11, Figures 11.3, 11.4), and one can imagine that, right from the beginning of settlement, [au] was part of the original New England feature pool alongside [ʌu/əu ~ ɹu ~ ɹu ~ ɔu].

To conclude this part of the discussion, Figure 20.1 below presents the various possible pathways followed by the reflexes of ME /u:/ between 1450 to

2 In Chapter 27, I ask the question whether this [ɔu] diphthong was not modelled on the London speech he heard around him during his long stay there and I tie this in with his proposal of *aa* [bi] (as an alternative for his *yi* [əi ~ ɹi] character (London /ɔi/) in his 1768 manuscript vowel and consonant table, another popular London-influenced feature that was finally rejected.

1800. Nearly all of these appear in the descriptions of English orthoepists. Traces of these can be seen in the New England town records as well as in modern dialects. The picture that emerges looks like this:

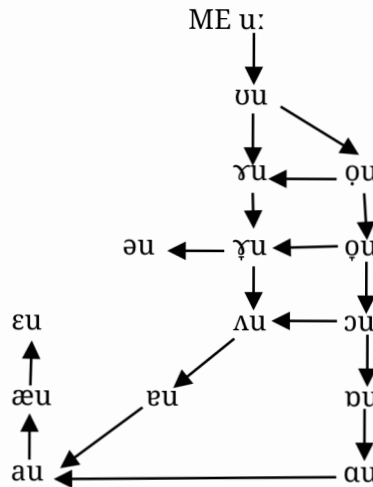


Fig. 20.1 Possible interdialectal trajectories of ME /u:/: 1450-1800.

1.2 Synchronic versus Diachronic Analyses

Taking into consideration the “uniformitarian principle,” I repeat the point made by Milroy (1982, 39) in his article “Probing under the Tip of the Iceberg,”

If twentieth century speakers observe great complexity of regular variation between /a/, then what is the status of characteristic historical “findings” of the kind that say “E Mod E /a/ was fronted to [æ] in the seventeenth century”? *Surely the language was not simpler in the past than it is now.* (my italics)

We have seen that variation in the pronunciation of any given word, such as Wells’ key word “mouth,” can be considerable even when viewed from a modern geolinguistic perspective. For instance, during the mid-20th century, the SED recorded [mu:θ], [maʊθ], [ma:θ], [mæʊθ] and [mɛʊθ] for Lincolnshire alone (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 752). Further west in Derbyshire, the SED gives [mɛʊθ], [maʊθ], [mɛ:θ]... (Orton & Barry, 1970, 609). What is striking in this small sample is that we observe a variety of pronunciations which encompass the entire 600-year span of phonological evolution implicated in the Great Vowel Shift, that is, from ME /u:/ > GA/RP /aʊ/. Put another way, in the mid-20th century, some Lincolnshire dialect speakers were still pronouncing this word as it was prior to 1450 while others realized ME /u:/ as it was in the EME periods. Others here are using innovations, such as [mɛ:θ], that have expanded far beyond the stage

reached by the RP/GA models. These were precisely the kinds of dialect speakers who arrived in the North American colonies four hundred years ago.

As stated in the General Introduction, these kinds of examples show how relevant comparing current attested geolinguistic forms and diachronic data can be to obtain a fuller view of different patterns of language change.

Again, as I have repeated on a number of occasions, adhering to overly strict caveats that force researchers to adopt either a strictly synchronic or a diachronic approach can prove to be counterproductive. The fact is continuously shifting variant forms have always existed over the centuries in all regions of England as well as English-speaking Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Each variety and subvariety has its own unique history.

1.3 What Is the Source of [æu] and [ɛu]?

It has already been pointed out that the common Lincolnshire pronunciation of *mouth* [mæuθ] is also the dominant one in the southern Appalachians today. We shall see that [mæuθ] was also attested in rural New England (cf. Willard, 1828, 1840, cited in Grandgent, 1899, 218). Krapp (1925, 34) confirms that, in his day, two pronunciations of the diphthong of *house*, *cow*, *about*, *south* were [æu] and [ɛu] which “is so general as to be almost universal in the South, *and so it was also in earlier periods in the North*” (my italics). These are commonly recorded not only in Lincolnshire but throughout the East Midlands, areas which contributed heavily to both the Massachusetts and Virginia colonies, particularly during and after the 1640s.

Wells (1989, 310) signals that [æu] is also attested in popular London English while Shorrocks (1998, 182-191), as mentioned above for Lincolnshire and Derbyshire, gives the following Lancashire examples with recent monophthongization. The most innovative is seen in words such as *round* [ɪɛ:nd ~ ɪæ:nd], *town* [tɛ:n], *cow* [kɛ:], *how* [ɛ: ~ æ:], *now* [nɛ:].³ If I mention this monophthongization to [ɛ:], it is simply because this process runs parallel to a similar treatment of ME /i:/ which resulted in the monophthongization of [ai] > [a: ~ ɑ:] on both sides of the Atlantic (primarily in the North of England and the southern US) (cf. Chapter 16). When viewed holistically, RP/GA /au/ can be seen diachronically as representing but one stage of development that was reached in some varieties around the 17th century and which must have lingered on in the feature pool until it began to gain dominance in the 19th century. Grandgent (1899, 228) points out that [æu] was common in the rural areas while [au] was popular in the towns towards the end of the 19th century.

3 I have collected the same words in nearby Deane in contexts such as [‘æ::t gɪm ‘bɒn] “How art going on?” or [‘as bɪ ‘gɪm ,nɛ:] “I’s (shall) be going now”... [‘kɛ:’ ðɪ ‘dɛ:n] “Cower thee down” (i.e. Sit down).

Proof of Krapp's statement is found in an important article, entitled "From Franklin to Lowell: A Century of New England Pronunciation," written by Charles Grandgent, who asserts that, in rural Massachusetts, the common pronunciation of <ow> or <ou>, "cow" for instance, was [kjæu] or [kæu] (1899, 228).⁴ Lowell (1848) also gives multiple examples of this kind for Massachusetts in his book, the *Biglow Papers* (1848). Hall gives the following examples for the Smokies: *about* [ə'bæut], *around* [ə'ɪæund], *cloud* [klæud], *found* [fæund], *house* [hæus], *mought* [mæut] (variant of *might* attested by Hart as *muht* [mʊxt]) but also *how* [hæu], *cow* [kæu], *bow* [bæu], *now* [næu], etc. (Hall, 1942, 45). Hall notes that some speakers elongate the first element of the diphthong [æ:u]. I have heard all of these words pronounced as [æ:ə] with slight erosion of the second element of this diphthong.

Hall's transcriptions of words spelt <ow> or <ou> as [æu] are edifying and could signal the existence of this innovative pronunciation during the earliest periods of the settlement (cf. Chapter 2). In other words, it appears to be one of the dominant features of the colonial koines that emerged during the course of the 17th and early 18th centuries. I have heard pronounced with an eroded second element of the diphthong which is realized as a schwa [æə]. This could mark the beginning of a stage towards monophthongization of the kind observed in the Northwest Midlands of England above. In the coastal areas of New England, it appears that the [əu] realization was favoured, most likely for sociolinguistic reasons given that it was associated with polite London speech. As we shall see, this is the pronunciation advocated by both Franklin (1768, 1779) and Webster (1783, 1786, 1789).

Grandgent goes on to offer some intriguing but problematic details about early American pronunciations of <ou>. He cites Macintosh (1797) who, like Isaac Newton (1661), associates <ow> spellings with French *aou* [au]. However, Grandgent, citing Willard (1840), describes the [æu] diphthong above.

Willard defines it as ɔu, and remarks: "many persons give to the o in this diphthong the Italian sound of a in car: and *what is unspeakably worse* (my italics), many others give it a flat sound, as in care"... Lowell shows regularly the form yæu or æu, which has become a striking feature of our rural dialect. The urban pronunciation is now au. (Grandgent, 1899, 228)

Nevertheless, if Willard's <a> of "car" is pronounced as in Italian, then it is close to [a] suggesting that <ow> was realized as [au]. He seems to frown on this, but we see that it was already well established in New England at the time. We also see that it was associated with "urban" speech. On the other hand, the flat sound of *care* seems to reflect and confirm the existence of [æ:ɪ] discussed in Chapter 19. This is confirmed by Krapp (1925, 109) who, citing Willard (1840, vii),

⁴ Note in passing that Grandgent assumed that the RMS reflected Franklin's Boston accent.

states that it is “precisely that of *can*, or *carry*, drawn out to a greater length or duration.” At another level, this reinforces my hypothesis that the New England poets’ pronunciation of rhymes such as *care* ~ *war* were indeed pronounced [kæ:ɪ] ~ [wæ:ɪ].

Grandgent (1899, 239), transcribes Lowell’s <ou> and <ow> spellings as follows: *our* [æuə], *now* [næu], *clouds* [klæudz], *loud* [læuəd], *house* [hæus], *brows* [bræuz], *bound* [bəund]...

Willard’s remark, “what is unspeakably worse,” is sociolinguistically pertinent in that the reference is to the pronunciation of [æ:ɪ] and its association with a “rural pronunciation.” This demonstrates the enormous contempt in which country people were held at the time. This attitude is very much alive today.

To conclude this discussion about Willard, if he frowned on [au] and showed open contempt for the use of [æ:u], what was his own pronunciation? For reasons to be explained in Chapters 25 and 27, Grandgent indicates above that Willard’s ideal pronunciation was [ɔu], just as proposed by Lass (1999). If so, this was a pronunciation that can be traced back to the 16th century (cf. Hart above).

To summarize, Willard and Grandgent are describing several variants. The first, and apparently most prestigious, appears to correspond to the contemporary London realization which was [ɒu? ~ ɔu]. The second, with the first element pronounced as in Italian <a>, was [au], which existed in Franklin’s day and may already have been more common in urban centres. The third is rural Massachusetts [æu] which has since disappeared.

Curiously, neither [ʌu] nor [əu] are mentioned suggesting that, by the 19th century, after the break with the motherland, [əu] was increasingly marginalized and limited to coastal Massachusetts (recall Labov’s 1972 study of recessive [əɪ] ~ [əu] on Martha’s Vineyard as an identity marker). This [əɪ] / [əu] pronunciation has remained intact in Newfoundland while I have already noted traces of it in Canada’s Ottawa Valley. It has survived along scattered regions of the eastern seaboard stretching from New England (Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut) as far south as the Tidewater regions of Virginia and North Carolina where it still can be heard today (Wise, 1948, 118). Without doubt, it is a feature that was introduced in colonial times.

Coming round full circle, Orbeck’s account of 17th-century New England pronunciation focusing on the towns of Groton, Watertown, Plymouth and Dedham, shows only one early suggestion of an [au] pronunciation, *graund* (Groton, 1676) (Orbeck, 1927, 52). Based on the spelling evidence <oow>, <ouu>, <o> or <u>, he concludes that it was realized in the vicinity of [ɔu ~ ɔʊ]. It is evident that the onset <oo> was once [ɔ: ~ u:] but as we shall soon see, it also corresponds to slightly centred [ʊ] and [ɤ], hence Wells’ transcription of *cut* as [kʏt] prior to its being lowered to [ʌ] (Wells, 1988, 198-199).

Orbeck also gives monophthongal variants such as *drond* [dɹɒnd] for

“drowned,” *sothe* [sɔθ] for “south” (Plymouth, 1701) and *abut* [əˈbʊt ~ əˈbʊrt] for “about” (Dedham, 1675) (Orbeck, 1927, 52), that is, monophthongs in the area of [ɔ ~ ʊ ~ ʏ].

However, given that Grandgent and earlier observers claim that the first element is “unrounded,” as we have seen previously, the early American interpretation of the [ɔ] symbol corresponds more closely to modern IPA [ɒ], which is precisely how I have interpreted Franklin’s transcription of this diphthong in his RMS (i.e. *aaʊ*). This may yet be another bit of evidence that Franklin sought to model his proto-phonemic orthography on what he viewed as cultivated London English, perhaps on the advice of Polly Stevenson. Considering that his Franklin realizes his *Price* words as [əi] in his RMS ([ʁi ~ əi] cannot be excluded for his native Boston accent), one would have expected him to pronounce his *Mouth* words [əʊ], but he does not.

To conclude, the New England phonetic range for orthographic <ou> during the 17th and 18th century appears to have resembled the following:

- a. [ɔʊ ~ ɒʊ ~ ɔʊ ~ ɒʊ]
- b. [ʁʊ ~ ʏʊ ~ ʌʊ/əʊ ~ ʌʊ ~ æʊ ~ ɛʊ] (cf. Fig. 20.1 above)

1.2 ME /u(:)r/

Dobson asserts that the pronunciation of ME /u(:)/ + /r/ varied between [ʌr], [u:r] and [ɔ:r]. My back high-mid [ɔ:] corresponds to his “[o:]”). He ascribes the passage from [u:] > [ɔ:] to the effects of r-colouring.

The undiphthongized pronunciation appears either as [u:] or (in the seventeenth century) as [o:] because of the lowering influence of the following r, and is commonly recorded (both in the sixteenth and in the seventeenth century) in *mourn*, *bourne*, *court*, and *courtier*, *course* (and its by-form *coarse*...), *source*, *form*, and *perform*, and *gourd*... (Dobson 1968: 688).

The lowered monophthongal pronunciation would presumably have been relatively commonplace in 17th-century America. Nevertheless, orthoepists disagree markedly with regard to the precise pronunciation of <our> spellings for any given word and these variant pronunciations seem to have co-existed. Recall John Wilkins’ transcription of “our” as <*ur*> [ʁʌ] in his rendition of the “Apostle’s Creed” above (cf. Chapter 13). This may also have represented [ʁʌ] conserving a stage of development preceding the lower and centralized [ʌ]. According to Dobson, Gil also pronounces *four* and *your* [fʌu(ə)ɹ] and [jʌuəɹ] respectively but also accepts the historically older [fʌ:əɹ] and, I assume, [iʌ:(ə)ɹ] ~ [ju:(ə)ɹ] as well. The latter realization is possible even today in some English varieties. Hodges pronounced *four* as [fɔ:(ə)ɹ] (or perhaps as a slightly raised [fɔ:(ə)ɹ]?). Likewise, Wallis indicates that *mourn* could be pronounced [mʌu.ɹ]

or [mu:ɪn] according to Dobson. Given that Wells describes [ɹ] as preceding the shift downward to [ʌ], we may have [ɹ] in many of these realizations, or variants close to it. I have respected Dobson's [ʌ] analysis here, however.

Dobson adds that the homophone lists given by Hodges and later orthoepists equate *pour* with *poor* (which Dobson indicates was pronounced either as [u:(ə)ɪ] or as [ɔ:(ə)ɪ]) as well as with *power*, which Dobson believes may have been pronounced [pʌu(ə)ɪ]. Cooper (1685), however, pairs *sour* with *swore*, *sower* and *sore* in his "near alike" list but the precise realization is unclear. Recall that Mazarin argues that Wilkins and Cooper both had [ɹ] as the first element of these diphthongs as well as in *Strut* words. Once again, Dobson suggests that the vowels here are either [u:] or [ɔ:]⁵ (Dobson, 1968, 689, cf. his note 4).⁶ Nevertheless, the existence of short realizations of these vowels would be a reasonable assumption and this possibility will be reconsidered in Chapter 22 (cf. New England short o).

2. New England Evidence

The earliest evidence of the pronunciation of <ou> or <ow> comes once again from the New England town records. Orbeck (1927, 52-53) gives spellings of "our" with a glide vowel: *hower*, with excrescent /h-/ (Plymouth, 1644), *owers* (Watertown, 1677), *ouer* (Groton, 1689) and "town" as *towen* (Groton, 1683). The key question is the quality of his <o>. Was it [ɔu], [ɔu] or [ɔu], as advocated by Willard? Grandgent (1899) interprets Franklin's transcription of *flower*, as transcribed in his spelling reform, by the American Dialect Society's phonetic symbol [ɔu]. As I explain in my introduction to back mid vowels in Chapter 21, I have interpreted the value of Grandgent's [ɔ] to be close to modern IPA [ɔ], giving [f'lɔuəɪ]. If this [ɔ] is equivalent to French unrounded [ɔ] of words like "botte," "donne" (and not the rounded [ɔ] English interpretation), this transcription would be quite close phonetically to Dobson's [ʌu(ə)ɪ] (1968, 688) and not too radically distant from Orbeck's [ɔwəɪ]. On the other hand, as we have already mentioned above, Franklin's RMS description of this first element in his reform appears to be [ɒ] (cf. RMS *flaaor* [f'lɒ(:)əɪ], cf. Appendix 3). For this reason, it may be more likely that Grandgent's interpretation of Franklin's transcription is indeed [f'lɔəɪ ~ f'lɔwəɪ]. This would make sense considering Franklin's rhymes below. If so, considering that Grandgent's (and Krapp's) /ɔ/ corresponds to my IPA /ɒ/, [f'lɒ:əɪ] is very likely

5 It is not always clear what value Dobson attributes to his IPA [o] transcription. Is it [ɔ] or [ɔ]? Here I take it to be the former.

6 Burton (2010, 71), however, shows that Barnes' realization of the vowel of *mourn* was centralized to [mæɪn] in 19th-century Dorset.

also his native pronunciation of it. His rhymes of *power* ~ *adore* and *flow'r* ~ *store*, below support this idea. This question will be considered again in more detail in Chapter 27. Once again, all of these variant forms correspond to the conservative models of pronouncing the diphthongs that were proposed above, [ou ~ ɔu ~ ɯ]. [ɔu ~ ɔu] and centralized [ɤu ~ ɤu] would thus be older variants. If my interpretation is correct, this would seem to conform quite nicely to Willard's preference of [ɔu] (or [ɯu]). Wright (1905, 445) shows that in the modern dialects, [fɒəɪ] is limited to areas of Wiltshire, Shropshire, Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire. Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire are respectively only 47 miles and 36 miles from Northampton where Franklin's father and older siblings originated. I have found no surviving examples of Dobson's [flau(ə)ɪ] although the pronunciation does not strike me as being outlandish, even today.⁷ Once again, Dobson's [fla(ə)ɪ] is very close to older [flɛəɪ]...

The rustic New England [æu] realization of <ou> and <ow> words corresponds closely to the treatment of this diphthong in the English Northwest Midlands, Appalachia and other southern US varieties. We have already noted that Orbeck gives only one possible example of <au>, *graund*, suggesting that the feature was not yet dominant in the 17th-century settlements.

For this class of ME /ur/ words, Shorrocks (1998, 182-191) records *flour* [fle:ɪ ~ flæ:ɪ], *sour* [sæ:ɪ], *hour* [ɛ:ɪ ~ æ:ɪ], *our* [ɛ:ɪ ~ æ:ɪ], *flower* [fle:ɪ ~ flæ:ɪ], *shower* [ʃɛ:ɪ ~ ʃæ:ɪ], *power* [pɛ:ɪ], *tower* [tɛ:ɪ]. For the Midlands, the SED gives pronunciations with [æ:ə] or [æ:ɪ]. Hall (1942, 46), on the other hand, gives similar forms such as *tower* ['tæ·əɪ], *hour* ['æ·əɪ], *shower* ['ʃæ·əɪ], *power* ['pæ·əɪ] and *flower* ['flæ·əɪ]... As suggested by Grandgent for New England, such realizations were probably widespread among the less formally educated two centuries ago and restricted to rural communities, as it still is today in the southern US.

2.1 The New England Poets = [ɒ(:)əɪ] ~ [ɔ(:)əɪ]

The raised [æəɪ] and [əuɪ ~ ʌəɪ] pronunciations discussed above are clearly incompatible with Dwight's rhymes matching <our> ~ <ore>. The [ɔuəɪ ~ ɔuəɪ ~ ɯəɪ] would seem to be more appropriate: *hour* ~ *store*, *devour* ~ *shore* and *devour* ~ *gore*. He also rhymes *power* (< OF *pouair*; first recorded as *pouer* in ME 1300) with a range of <ore> words: *power* ~ *bore*, *power* ~ *gore* as well as *hour* ~ *power* (three times). Words such as *tower* and *bower* also fall in this category

7 During the late 1960s, I was intrigued by one of my teachers, from the Tidewater area of Virginia, who pronounced the diphthong in words like *about*, *out* which sounded to me like a short, clipped, almost monolingual [ø^u] realization.

(< OF *tour* and *bour*) as well as *scower'd* ~ *roar'd*. Again, recall Franklin's RMS transcription for *flower* is *flaaou* which, literally transcribed would be [flɒ:əɪ] (Chapters 25, 27, 28), a pronunciation I've heard in the Appalachians (e.g. "purdy as a flower"). Barlow also provides a remarkable number of rhymes paring *power* with <ore> words: *power* ~ *store*, *power* ~ *shore*, *power* ~ *gore*, *power* ~ *more*, *power* ~ *soar*, *power* ~ *o'er*, *power* ~ *sore*, *power* ~ *bore*, *power* ~ *lore* and *power* ~ *before*... Recall that orthographic <or> had a value close to [ɒ(:)ɪ] in Franklin's RMS. The suggestion here is that <ore> may have been realized by him as [ɒ:ɪ] in which case, the phonetic range for New England may have resembled [ɒ:ɪ ~ ɔ:ɪ ~ ɔ̃:ɪ]. The latter two pronunciations are common in words such as *pore*, *sore*, *more* in GA. Note that [pɑ:ɪ], [flɑ:ɪ], etc. is common today in the deep South.

Franklin shares the same rhymes as Dwight matching *flow'r* and *pow'r*. The elision of orthographic <e>, giving <ow'r>, was a common 18th-century spelling convention and may imply a clipped monophthongal representation of <ower> followed by relatively strong articulation of the /r/.

Like common Grass, the fairest *Flow'r*
Must feel the hoary Season's *Pow'r*. (1740)

I pluck'd this morn these beauteous *flow'rs*,
Emblem of my fleeting *hours*. (1748)

For what avails Birth, Beauty, Fortune's *Store*,
The Plume of Title, and the Pride of *Pow'r*. (1751)

The busy Nation flies from *Flow'r* to *Flow'r*,
And hoards, in curious Cells, the golden *Store*. (1756)

I see the Hand; I worship, I *adore*,
And justify the great disposing *Power*. (1757)

The last three examples show the same <ower> ~ <ore> combinations. A hint regarding the pronunciation of these words may come from the following couplet, composed in 1734 when Franklin was only twenty-eight years old, matching *store* and *poor*.

Since when, dull Ignorance with Fortune's *Store*
Hath been inrich'd,⁸ and Art hath still been *poor*. (1734)

This provides evidence suggesting that *poor*, *power* and *pore* shared a common, or at a least similar pronunciation somewhere in the vicinity of [ɔ̃:ɪ ~ ɔ:ɪ ~ ɒ:ɪ]. Grandgent (1899) offers a precise, albeit late, description of *poor* for

8 This is another example of his use of the *pen-pin* merger.

Massachusetts, which may shed some light on the variant pronunciations of <oor> and <ore> spellings.

“Long oo,” like î (i.e. [i:]) and ô (i.e. [o:]), may either have the close or the open pronunciation, *pūər* (= [IPA puəɪ]) or *pʊəɪ* (= [pʊəɪ]). In some dialects this *ʊ* [= *ʊ*] is further lowered to *ɔ*, *ɒ* (= [ɔ] & [ɒ]), and even *ɔ* (= [ɔ]); in New England this practice exists only for a few words, such as *sure* and *your*, and is frowned upon everywhere but in Boston, where *ɟʊəz* (= [ɟʊəz]) = *yours* is very common. It certainly goes back to 1795, when we find *ʃɔəɪ* (= [ʃɔəɪ ~ ʃɒəɪ]?) *sure* noted as an “impropriety.” (Grandgent, 1899, 217-218)

These details are helpful in that we see that *poor* could be pronounced [puəɪ ~ pʊəɪ] alongside lowered [pɔəɪ ~ pɒəɪ] “and even” [pɒəɪ]... This would tie in quite well of his account of *pore* which allows for both [pɔəɪ] and [pɒəɪ ~ pɒəɪ] and perhaps [pɒəɪ], demonstrating that, for some New Englanders, *poor* and *pore* were potentially homonyms as they can still be today in [pɔəɪ] (perceived as American “southern”) and RP [pɔ:ɪ].

Based on the evidence provided Grandgent’s, that Franklin’s Boston pronunciation of <flower> approached IPA [flɔuəɪ] (American Dialect Society [flɔuəɪ]) or [flɒuəɪ] in which case it would be identical to his transcription of *flower* in his RMS. If so, this is phonetically close to one of the possible pronunciations Grandgent describes for “poor”, i.e., [pɔəɪ] (albeit 109 years after Franklin’s death). I would thus opt for a pronunciation closer to modern IPA [ɔuəɪ ~ ɒuəɪ]. Along with Orbeck’s monophthongal variables (*drond*, *abut*, etc.), these are very likely to have been the common variants in Boston during Franklin’s youth.

To summarize, the realization of 18th-century New England <our> and <ow’r> would thus appear to have had a phonetic range in the vicinity of [ɔuəɪ ~ ɒuəɪ] and perhaps lowered [ɒuəɪ]. An onset vowel in the vicinity of Dobson’s [ʌuəɪ] or, perhaps more likely, [ɹuəɪ] may have been more common during the 17th century but would no doubt have still been heard a century later.

Pore words would thus seem to have been realized as [ɔəɪ ~ ɔəɪ ~ ɒəɪ]. Given Grandgent’s assessment, depending on the speaker and region, *Poor* words would have been pronounced [uəɪ ~ ʊəɪ ~ ɔəɪ ~ ɒəɪ ~ ɔəɪ ~ ɒəɪ]. Regarding Franklin’s native pronunciation of this diphthong, even though I would have expected his pronunciation to be close to [ɹu ~ əu] (i.e. in equilibrium with his [ɹi ~ əi] diphthong), the complexity and uncertainty of the data hinder our ability to come to any firm conclusion. Nevertheless, his rhymes of *store* ~ *poor* would seem to confirm the last of this string of possibilities, that is, [pɒəɪ] (which he would also have rhymed with *flower* and *power*).

Since when, dull Ignorance with Fortune's *Store*
Hath been inrich'd,⁹ and Art hath still been *poor*. (1734)

This would thus suggest that his innovative RMS [pəɹ] pronunciation may well have been his own.

2.2 ME /u/, “u obscurum”

Wolfe (1972, 70) proposes several possible descriptions for this for the EME reflex of what Wallis called “u obscurum.” Wolfe interprets Wallis’ evidence placing it between [ɔ] and [ʌ] and she sees Tiffin (a century later) giving it a value close to [i]. But Wolfe suggests that it could be equally [ə] or [ɜ]. She then quotes Dobson (1968, 241-242) who proposes [ə] “in contrast to [ʌ].” She concludes that “...the nature of the sound is sufficiently doubtful that it does not seem to provide unequivocal evidence for the priority of centralization over lowering.”

Lass (1999, 89) explains that Wallis (1653) was the first orthoepist to provide a “useful” account of the pronunciation of short ME /u/ words which now have /ʌ/. Lass interprets the sound as being “open, perhaps weakly rounded, and distinct from *ê pingue* [fat û], which is high, rounded and is the other ME /u/ reflex, long *û pingue* (= ME /o: /), i.e. [u:], in boot.” He adds “the description of non-peripheral vowels is notoriously difficult even now.”

Based on the evidence that we have seen above, and Lass’ description of it, it seems very possible that this vowel was in the vicinity of [ɤ ~ ʊ]. We shall see that Avis (1971) describes New England short o as [ə]. Shorrocks (1998, 205) describes this IPA character as a slightly fronted mid central vowel on the way to [œ]. Avis (1971), however, portrays [ə] for New England as having a “fronted and lowered mid-back position” realization. Support for a possible [ɤ] value comes from 17th-century Massachusetts spellings of words like “home” as *hum* or *hooome* but also a host of other sources that will be reviewed in more detail in Chapter 22. Support for this analysis comes from evidence proposed by Grandgent and other dialectologists since the 19th century and, more especially, Wells’ synthetic account (1988, 199) in Figure 20.2 where he identifies [ɤ] symbol in preceding the lowering to [ʌ] the context of the *Foot-Strut* “non-split.” This involves large areas of England where [ɤ] was not lowered to [ʌ], such as the Midlands and North of England, as well as Massachusetts. The shift to [ʌ] in *Strut* words occurred in the South of England and is generally dated to around 1600. Based on orthoepists’ descriptions, such as Hodges (1644) or Lodwick (1686), the [ɤ] vowel was still present in the East Midlands dialects throughout the 17th century. One wonders then whether Avis’ “fronted and lowered mid-back position” really corresponds to [ɤ] or [ɤ] rather than [ə]? His

9 This is another example of his use of the *pen-pin* merger.

description of it is almost identical to that of Grandgent's (more below).

Fig. 20.2 Wells' presentation of the evolution of ME /ɔ:/ and ME /u/.

	mood	blood	Good	cut	put
ME	ɔ:	ɔ:	ɔ:	u	u
GVS	u:	u:	u:	u	u
Early shortening	u:	u	u:	u	u
Quality adjustment	u:	ʊ	u:	ʊ	ʊ
<i>Foot-Strut</i> split	u:	ʌ	u:	ʌ	ʊ
Later shortening	u:	ʌ	ʊ	ʌ	ʊ
Quality adjustment		ʌ	ʊ	ʌ	
Output (i.e. GA/RP!)	u:	ʌ	ʊ	ʌ	ʊ

This, of course, fits the scheme where the final output is GA/RP but, as we have seen, when viewed cross-dialectally (in England and America), the picture is far more complex. Wells (ibid.) presents the unsplit *Foot-Strut* words as follows: *mood*, *blood* and *good* would have been raised from [ɔ:] > [u:] (GVS) by around 1500, while *cut* and *put* would have had [u]. A quality adjustment would explain [u] > [ʊ] for *blood* and *put*. This pronunciation of *blood* and *flood* is still representative of much of northern England today. We shall see that large areas of the Midlands of England were affected by this unsplit *Foot-Strut*, but I am also convinced that the main variants during the 17th- and 18th-century Massachusetts were [ʊ ~ ʌ], as portrayed in Wells' table above. [ʌ] is at an intermediate stage between [ʊ] and [ʌ].

Hall's description of contemporary GA /ʌ/ in the Smokies (cf. below) may conserve an echo of the muddled phonetic descriptions provided by Wallis. Hall too has difficulty pinning down the exact nature of his own "u obscurum." He explains that GA /ʌ/ is pronounced in the Smokies with a "faint [ʊ] tinge or distinct [ʊ] before nasals... *bucket, supper, dumb, hunt, plumb, summer, thunder, under...* but also in *brother, mother, come, company, dozen and tongue.*" He then writes, "It is produced possibly through a slight raising and retraction (centering) toward [ʊ] but more probably it is [ʌ] with lip rounding" (Hall, 1942, 39).¹⁰

In West Virginia, and western areas of Virginia, for words such as *brother, mother, dozen, tongue, love, dove, shove*, but also *blood* and *flood*, I have heard

¹⁰ It would thus seem that the reflex of Hall's centralized pronunciation of short ME u and ME o is probably raised, slightly rounded but, I would add, with a slight nasal quality for Appalachia as a whole. Furthermore, in my experience, it is often long or half-long (especially in monosyllables and before voiced stops, fricatives and nasals).

what, to my ear, sounds like a longish, centralized, nasal [ä:]. This is not to be confused with a slightly higher, centralized, nasal [ÿ:] in *wood* [wü:d], *hood* [hÿ:d], *book* [bü:k], *wolf* [wÿ:lf], etc. The latter may reflect evolved variants of older [u(:) ~ ʊ(:) ~ ʏ(:)] variants.

Interestingly, Labov et al (2006) suggests weak contrast between *Strut* and *Foot* words. As we have previously stated, during the early period of colonization, the *Strut-Foot* split was only in its beginning stages and this phenomenon may well be an echo or reflex of early colonial speech.

As I have just stated above, at another level, this description may bear some resemblance to Avis' /ə/ phoneme in his descriptions of New England short o (which I also associate New England short u). Krapp (1925, 132), citing Whitney (1874, 216), describes the sound of the vowel of *stone*, *home*, *whole* as being similar to the vowel of *son*, *some*, etc. which, he (i.e. Krapp) goes on to say it is "a mid-back sound though the part of the tongue elevated in forming this sound lies a little in front of the back position, best described as half-back." Since the point of reference here concerns mid back [ɔ:], this corresponds well to Grandgent's description of the short equivalent of "hole" that describes as being "slightly advanced" from [ɔ] (Grandgent, 1899, 217). This can only mean [ʏ] and not the [ʌ] of RP/GA for *son*, *some*.

With regard to Franklin's RMS, we already stated that Mazarin (2020, 6) makes a keen observation regarding his choice of the <ɥ> character to reflect *Strut* words (*come*, *done*, *sun*, *cut*...). I have already made this connection between Franklin and Wilkin's use of <ɥ> in their transcriptions. (See Chapter 13 for Wilkins' possible influences on Franklin.)

...it is worth adding that Wilkins wrote his short new STRUT vowel /ɥ/ as a modified (whence Franklin's STRUT symbol) in honor of its Welsh value /ə/. Other grammarians were more struck by /ɥ/'s [o]-like quality (unsurprisingly, since IPA [ɥ] = unrounded cardinal [o]). (cf. my description of this in Chapters 21 and 22)

Dobson (1968, 586) dates the emergence of the centralized, unrounded [ʌ] variable (from ME short u) to 1640 (citing Daines), implying that, for him, the *Strut-Foot* split began to appear around the mid-17th century. For this reason, I would propose a phonetic range of [ʊ ~ ʏ ~ ʌ] for New England as a whole (including Connecticut), just as is the case for contemporary Norfolk (see below).

As it happens, there is a direct English parallel to this short o, a phenomenon corresponding closely to a phoneme Trudgill transcribes as /ʊ/ for contemporary Norfolk and which we shall discuss more fully in the section on New English short o in Chapter 22. Evidence recorded by the SED fieldworkers in Norfolk demonstrated that, given their close proximity, Trudgill's /ʊ/ certainly has an [ɥ] allophone (Orton & Tilling, 1970) (for examples, see below).

Lass (1999, 90) explains that the shortenings of [u:] > [u] > [ʊ] > [ʌ] occur at

different periods. My first observation is that the passage from short [u] > [ʊ] involves centring, and the passage from [ʊ] > [ʌ] is missing two important steps: [ʊ] > [ɤ] > [ɣ] > [ʌ]. This fits nicely with Wells' analysis of *Cut* and *Blood* words (Wells, 1988, 199).

We shall also see that ME /ɔ:/ also figures in this scheme whereby it was also raised to /u:/ and then shortened and lowered to [u ~ ʊ] and then progressively lowered along the same path as ME /u/ (*cut, strut, rut*), ME /ɔ:/ (*foot* and *blood*) and ME /u:/ (i.e. certain shortened *Goose* words *hoof, roof, food, moon, proof*).

Lass ties this discussion in with ME /i:/ and ME /e:/ (= my high-mid /e:/) and makes the important observation that “no orthoepist before Robinson (1619) reports a quality difference between ME /e:/ and /i/, or /ɔ:/ and /u/: they all give e.g. *beet* ~ *bit*, *pool* ~ *pull* as length pairs.”¹¹ By this he means [bi:t] ~ [bit] (not [bɪt]) and [pu:l] ~ [pul] (not [pʊl]). We have already provided abundant evidence of the veracity of the phonemic opposition of /i:/ ~ /i/ in Chapter 16.

Lass' argument appears to be confirmed for New England because Grandgent (1899, 226), citing MacKintosh (1797), who wrote in French, claims that “the u of *pull* is the same thing as French *ou* in *poule*,” and therefore clearly [u] and not [ʊ]. I take these observations at face value and have heard a number relic pronunciations of this type. If so, this tense [u] had a longer life span than previously imagined. Lass (1999, 89), for instance, explains that in RP/GA English:

u tends to remain before labials *pull, bull, full, wool*... ʌ tends to appear elsewhere, *stuff, duck*... Secondly, and conversely, both u and ʌ are joined in all environments by reflexes of shortened ME /o:/: *flood, blood, good, foot*.

Wise (1948, 118) makes the interesting observation that “Walker, only 23 years after Franklin, uses his [u]³ in *would, could*, etc. apparently meaning [ʊ].” He adds that “All modern interpreters of Franklin, from Ellis onward, appear to yield to the belief that Franklin used [u] in both *rule* and *book*. Pending further study, there seems little else to do” (Wise, 1948, 118). In light of MacKintosh's observation regarding “pull” ~ French *poule*, the conservative pronunciation of /u/ before /l/ in *pull* and probably *bull*, signals that [u] was still heard in some varieties as on the eve of the 18th century.

By “reflexes of shortened ME /o:/,” Lass means high-mid /o:/ (i.e. my /ɔ:/). The presumed path taken by this vowel would have been as follows. Words such as *food* and *boot* (like *mood* above) would have conserved the earlier stage of pronunciation (GVS: /u:/). However, as we shall see, in many varieties (including Massachusetts) *food* and *boot* were shortened too to [fud ~ fʊd ~ frd] and [but ~ bʊt ~ bɪt] respectively. *Good* and *foot*, with long /u:/ would then have been shortened to [u ~ ʊ ~ ɤ]. In some modern varieties (Scots), these have been

11 Cf. Chapters 7 and 9 for Franklin's minimal pair *sin* ~ *seen*, which he also describes as differing only quantitatively.

centralized to [ʌ], just as in RP/GA *flood* and *blood*.

I shall argue that, in Boston during Franklin's time, *flood* and *blood* were still pronounced [ʁ] as late as the 18th century, long after the *Foot-Strut* split is generally thought to have occurred, that is, around 1600. Evidence for this will be presented from the New England town records. The situation described here is not too distant from the northern English system where *blood* and *flood* are still pronounced /u/ and variants thereof.

3. 17th-Century New England and Modern Norfolk Evidence: ME /u/ > [ʊ ~ ʁ ~ ʌ]

It is generally stated that ME short /u/ was realized as [ʊ ~ u] by the end of Middle English period. Mazarin (2020, 4) explains that the *Strut* ~ *Foot* split occurred at some point prior to 1600 and that, prior to this, *Strut* words were pronounced with an “o-like” [ʁ]. Wells (1988, 69, 198-199), on the other hand, indicates the existence of what he calls “unsplit *Strut-Foot*” in contemporary English dialects which he identifies as involving a large swath of central England that extends from the Wash, just to the north of East Anglia, to the west into Shropshire, Hereford and Worcester.

Wright (1905, 17) describes the same phenomenon using the symbol [ù] for “the midlands.” Seen from a strictly diachronic perspective, these English varieties have preserved the pronunciation common in England prior to the year 1600. The fact is that we have already seen dozens of examples of this kind showing that dialects often preserve a wide range of surprisingly conservative features (Ihalainen, 1994), often alongside innovative characteristics.

In support of this [ʁ] hypothesis, the SED gives numerous examples for contemporary Norfolk such as [ˈsiːgɹl] and [ˈɪɪɪdɹvz] or [ˈtəːʔɪdɹvz], etc. as pronunciations of *seagull*, *ringdoves* and *turtledoves* (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 505, 593). The SED offers many other examples of <u> pronounced [ʁ], all in Norfolk: for “foot” [fɹæt], [fɹt], [fʊt] (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 814), “flood” [flɹd], [flʌd] (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 424), “brush” [bɹʃ] next to [brʌʃ] (dominant) (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 593), “roof” [ɹɹf] (attested in 6 localities out of 13) next to [ɹʊf] & ruːf] (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 562), “jump” [dʒɹmp], [dʒʌmp] (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 445), “stump” of a tree [stɹmp], [stʌmp] (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 557), “duck” [dɹk] (5 localities out of 13) alongside [dʌks] (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 493), “ruts” [ɹɹts] (7 localities/13), [ɹʊts], [ɹʌts] (4 localities/ 13) (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 455), “put” [pɹʔ] (2 localities/13) with [puʔ] dominant (Orton & Tilling 1971, 1231), “dust” [dɹst] (7 localities/13) next to [dʌst] (Orton & Tilling, 1971, 1012), “us” [ɹs] (6 localities/13) (Orton & Tilling, 1971, 1307) and, finally, “butcher” [ˈbɹtʃə] (2 localities/13) beside [ˈbʊtʃə] (Orton & Tilling, 1971, 1117). Regionally, [ʁ] coexists alongside common [ʌ] and [ʊ] variants. An analogous situation may have existed

in 18th-century Massachusetts.

David Parry (1999, 18) also records *butcher*, *butter*, *suck* and also *onions* and *nothing* with [ɤ] for Gwent and Clwyd, showing its presence extends well to the west in East Wales as well. Although the sceptic might argue that these examples do not necessarily mean [ɤ] represents the unchanged conservative pronunciation, it does show that, at the very least, this pronunciation is a natural variable of [ʊ] and [ʌ] in these environments.

Just as for Parry's [ɤ] examples of *onion* and *nothing*, pronounced /ʌ/ in GA and RP, Norfolk offers another long list of [ɤ] pronunciations, including a number of key words which will be discussed later: "none" [nɤn] (7 localities out of 13) (Orton & Tilling, 1971, 924), "whole" [hɔl] with short [ɔ] (Orton & Tilling, 1971, 939), "something" ['sɤmpθɪŋ], ['sɤmpɪ],¹² ['sɤfm] (Orton & Tilling, 1971, 1049), Norfolk: "son" [sɤn] (2 localities/ 13), [sʌn] (9 localities/13) (Orton & Tilling, 1971, 1063), "brother" [brɤðə] (2 localities/13), [brʌðə] (10 localities/13) (Orton & Tilling, 1971, 1064), "cousins" ['kɤznz] (3 localities/13) [kʌznz] (Orton & Tilling 1971: 1076), "come" [kɤm] (3 localities/13), [kʌm] (Orton & Tilling, 1971, 1102) and, finally, "among" [ə'mɤŋst] (2 localities/13), [mɤŋ] (1 locality/13) [ə'mʌŋst] (Orton & Tilling, 1971, 1224), "not" [nɤt] (1 locality/13), [nʌt] (2 localities/13), [nɒt] (dominant form) (Orton & Tilling, 1971, 1305), one [wɔn], "the other" [ði 'ʊðə], [wʌn & tʌðə] (Orton & Tilling, 1971, 1318), "enough" [ənɤf] (3 localities/13) [ənʌf] (10 localities/13) (Orton & Tilling, 1971, 1341).

These [ɤ] pronunciations, although still relatively numerous, are recessive in this region and, if the hypothesis proposed above is plausible, this feature was also once shared by the counties to the west and north. Given the close ties between East Anglia and the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the hypothesis in favour of an "unsplit" *Strut-Foot* in New England is certainly reinforced by this data. I shall argue that *Strut*, *Foot* and some shortened *Goose* words continued to be pronounced in the area of [ɤ] in New England throughout the 18th century. I will also argue that it is very likely this [ɤ] variant sometimes merged with a slightly lower [ɤ̞] variant that developed out of ME /u/, shortened ME /ɔ:/ and ME /ɔ/.

3.1 Evidence from the New England Town Records

Orbeck (1927, 45) gives a considerable number of 17th-century examples of *Strut* words which demonstrate the difficulty Massachusetts clerks had to pin down the exact nature of this vowel sound which, very logically, they noted as either <u> or <o>. Here again, considering the mixed population of settlers from eastern and southern England and the (East) Midlands, there was certainly a phonetic range involved here as well: *duzen* ['dʊzn ~ 'dɤzn] "dozen" (Dedham, 1685), *culler*

¹² ['sʌʔm] in Virginia.

[ˈkʊləɪ ~ ˈkʰələɪ] “color” (Plymouth, 1662), *cums* [kʊmz ~ kʰmz] “comes” (Groton, 1702) (cf. Lowell’s *cums* 1848), *cumpas* [ˈkʊmpəs ~ ˈkʰmpəs] “compass” (Dedham, 1636), *Munday* [ˈmʊndɛɪ ~ ˈmʰndɛɪ] “Monday” (Dedham, 1685, Plymouth, 1642, Watertown, 1659), *muneɪ* [ˈmʊnɛɪ ~ ˈmʰnɛɪ] “money” (Groton, 1680), *munth* [mʊnθ ~ mʰnθ] “month” (Watertown, 1672), *amunst* [əˈmʊnst ~ əˈmʰnst] “amongst” (Groton, 1665), *wuns* [wʊns ~ wʰns] “once” (Groton, 1685), *sum(e)* [sʊm ~ sʰm] “some” (Groton, 1668, Dedham, 1656), *tung(e)* [tʊŋ ~ tʰŋ] “tongue” (Groton, 1681, Watertown, 1678), *cuntrey* [ˈkʊntɪɪ ~ ˈkʰntɪɪ] for “country” (Dedham, 1636, Groton, 1686). In Chapters 21 and 22, compare these examples with New England spellings of “home” and “stone” as *hum*, *stun*, etc.

There are a number of doublets however, spelt either <o> or <u>. On account of the value of <u>, it seems more likely that we are dealing here with a vowel closer to high-mid [ɔ] or mid [ɒ] and perhaps even unrounded o-like [ʊ]: *doble*, “double” [ˈdɔbɪ ~ ˈdʰbɪ] (Dedham, 1638), *duble* [ˈdʊbɪ ~ ˈdʰbɪ] (Watertown, 1647, Plymouth, 1679, Groton, 1693), *troble* [ˈtɔbɪ ~ ˈtʰbɪ], (Plymouth, 1663, Dedham, 1669), *truble* [ˈtʊbɪ ~ ˈtʰbɪ] (Watertown, 1671, Groton, 1694), *yong* [jɔŋ ~ jʰŋ] “young” (Plymouth, 1642), *costady* [ˈkɔstədi ~ ˈkʰstədi] “custody” (Plymouth, 1670), *hondred* [ˈhɔndəd ~ ˈhʰndəd] (Groton, 1706).

Orbeck (1927, 46) notes more examples of this oscillation between <o> and <u> which very well could be an attempt to represent [ʊ ~ ʊ̥]. Interpreted literally, Orbeck’s examples are *locking* [ˈlɔkiŋ] for “looking” (Watertown, 1673), *luck* [lʊk ~ lʰk] for “look” (Groton, 1704), *brock* [brɔk] (Groton, 1682), *brok* [brɔk] (Plymouth, 1692), *bruck* [brʊk ~ brɔk] for “brook” (Groton, 1705), *buck* [bʊk ~ brɔk] for “book” (Groton, 1683), *toke* [tɔk] “took” (Groton, 1693), *tuck* [tʊk ~ tʰk] (Plymouth, 1693), *understud* [ˈʊndəˈstʊd ~ ˈʰndəˈstʰd] “understood” (Dedham, 1697), *fut* [fʊt ~ fʰt] “foot” (Plymouth, 1698), *Holbrocke* [ˈhɔlbɔk ~ ˈhɔlbɔk] for “Holbrook” (Dedham, 1686), *Wodes* [wɔdz] “Wood’s” (Groton, 1678), *Wod* [wɔd] “wood” (Groton, 1682).

Orbeck hypothesized that “we may possibly assume a short u in such forms” and in this I think his assessment is close to the mark with <o> possibly corresponding to [ʊ] and <u> representing a slightly higher [ʊ ~ ʊ̥]. Essentially, we are dealing with roughly the same sounds for all of these orthographic correspondences [ʊ ~ ʊ̥ ~ ʊ̥̥].

This hypothesis will be re-examined in the context of *Goat* words (< ME /ɔ:/) in the case of *home*, *stone*, *road*, *whole*, etc. as well as *Lot* words, *rod*, *cloth*, *God*, *wrong*, etc. all of which were, on occasion, spelt with <u> or <oo> in the early town records and which Grandgent (1899) describes for Massachusetts as short /ʊ/, i.e. New England short o.

A hint about the nature of these doublets may come from an observation by Shorrocks (1998, 233) who writes that one of the higher back variants for short Bolton /ɔ/ is [ɔ̥] and [ɔ̥̥]. He writes that “these very high variants are around

[o] (i.e. my [ɔ]) and at this point, are within the territory of the /u/ phoneme.” Among his examples are “top,” “bob” (shilling), “boxing,” etc. (cf. Dwight’s rhyme of *shop ~ cup*) and rhymes such as *wrong ~ tongue*. More on this in Chapter 22.

Compare these observations with my transcription of Wilkins’ Apostles’ Creed, 1668 (cf. Figure 13.6 in Chapter 13 for Wilkins’ original transcription). Recall also that Mazarin considers Wilkins’ *ȳ* character to have had the value of [ɣ]. I have highlighted all the occurrences of [ɣ] in this passage for easier reading.

//*ɣ*i bi'li:v in 'gɒd ðe 'fæðeɪ ɒl*ɣ*mɪti 'mæ:kəɪ ɒv 'he:ven ænd 'eɪθ, ænd in ,dʒesʁs 'kɪrist hɪz ,ɒnli 'sɒn ɹuɪ 'lɔɪd / 'hu: waz kɒn'se:vəd bɪri ðe ,hɒli 'gɒst /'bɔɪn ɒf ðe ,viɹgin [sic] 'mæ:ɪ / 'sɹʔeɪəd ,ɹnder pɒnsɪɹs 'pɹɪlæt / waz 'kɹiusɪfɪəd 'dɛd and 'bɹɪəd // hi dɛ'sɛndəd ,ɪntu 'hel / ðe ,θɹɪd 'dæi hi 'rɔ:s əgæin frɒm ðe 'dɛd // hi ə'sɛndəd ,ɪntu 'he:ven / 'hwe:ɪ hi 'siteθ æt ðe 'ɹɪt ,hænd ɒf 'gɒd ðe 'fæ:ðeɪ / frɒm 'hwens hi ʃɒl¹³ 'kɹɪm tu 'dʒɹdʒ ðe 'kwɪk and ðe 'dɛd / ,ɹi bi'li:v in ðe 'hɒli 'gɒst / ðe 'hɒli 'kəθɒlɪk 'tʃɹɪtʃ ðe kə'miunion ɒf 'sæints / ðe fɔɹ'gɪvnɪs ɒf 'sɪnz / dɛ [sic] ,ɹesɹ'ɹeksɪɒn ɒf ðe 'badi / ænd 'bɪt ,ɛvɛɹ'læstɪŋ // ,æ'men //

I believe in God the father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only son our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilot, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell the third day. He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven where he sitteth at the right hand of God the father from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, de resurrection of the body and light everlasting. Amen.

Here Wilkins notes [ɣ] in following orthographic contexts:

<u>	<o>	<our>	<ight>	<i>	<y>
suffered	son	our	almighty	Christ	by
judge	come		right	pilot	
Pontius			light	I	
buried				third	
church					
resurrection					

13 Initially I had some doubt as to the accuracy of my transcription of Wilkins’ “shall” (i.e. as [ʃɒl]), but a passage from Webster (1789, 114) reassured me that it was current not only in 17th-century England but also in New England. He writes, “The words *shall*, *quality*, *quantity*, *qualify*, *quandary*, *quadrant*, are differently pronounced by good speakers. Some give a broad sound, as in *shol*, *quolity*; and others, its second sound, as in *hat*. With respect to the four first, almost all the standard writers* agree to pronounce a short, as in *hat*. (*By standard writers, I mean, Kenrick, Sheridan, Burn, Perry and Scott).”

With one exception, *virgin*, we observe the first steps towards centralization with *yr* spellings for *church*, *buried*, *third*, *resurrection*, *Pontius*.

This compares fairly well with Mazarin's IPA transcription of Lodwick's C1 rendition of the Lord's Prayer:

/ɔʊr fæðer hwitʃ ært in hevn, halo:ʔed [sic] bi ðei nə:m. ðei kɪŋdɹm kɹm, ðei wil bi dɹn in jɹrθ æz it iz in hevn. giv ɹs ðis de: ɔʊr de:lei [sic] bred, ænd fɹgɪv ɹs ɔʊr trespæsez, æz wi fɹgɪv ðem ðæt trespæs æge:nst ɹs. ænd le:d ɹs nɹt [sic] intu temte:ʃɹn, bɹt de:liver ɹs fram ivl/.

Although “our” is transcribed with a more conservative onset vowel [ɔʊɹ] rather than Wilkins' [ɹuɹ], the other occurrences are logical for the time. Again, both suggest that [ʌu] ~ [əu] had not taken root in their speech communities (cf. idiom ~ institution, Chapter 10). Also interesting is the fact that we see “name” transcribed as [nɛ:m] and not [nɐ:m] as recorded by Miége during the same decade, thus confirming the possibility of my analysis for [ɛ: ~ ɐ:] pronunciations in New England. Again, “not” [nɒt] is transcribed here as [nɹt] as it is in Norfolk by the SED (cf. Chapters 21 and 22). We shall see that the New England poets' rhymes suggest the same pronunciation of “not.”

3.2 Summary

To summarize, the New England scribes appear to have been attempting to represent a sound which could be interpreted as falling in the [ʊ ~ ɹ] range for orthographic <u>, on the one hand and <o> [ɔ ~ ɹ] on the other. This more focused interpretation is compatible with the slightly centralized mid [ɹ ~ ɹ̥] pronunciation which appear to have been one of the possible 17th-century New England pronunciations of not only *strut*, *cup*, *mud* but also *blood*, *flood* and a subclass of *Goose* words such as *food*, *soon*, *moon*, *proof*, etc. It is not certain whether [ʌ] was a variable at this point but, according to Lowell and Grandgent, [ʌ] (his symbol being [e]) was not heard in Massachusetts until after the mid-19th century. Put another way, as pointed out by Wells (1988) and Wright (1905) for the English Midlands and parts of East Anglia (SED 1970), the *Foot-Strut* split was not yet fully complete in 17th- and 18th-century New England and traces of this are still apparent not only in New England today (Avis, 1971), but also in the English Midlands and in Norfolk.

Since Franklin uses the same *y* symbol as Wilkins for his *Strut* words and his *Price* diphthong *yi*, this would seem to indicate values of [ɹ] and [ɹi] in both cases (cf. Part IV). The parallel with Wilkins' transcriptions does not seem outlandish given that the Wilkins died in 1672 and Franklin was born in 1706. However, for reasons explained in Chapter 16, I have also allowed for [ɹi ~ əi] variants for *Price* words which I present phonemically as /əi/ in his RMS system. In Chapter 21, we shall deal with the reflexes of ME /ɔ:/, that is, the history of

Goose and Foot words, which will clarify a number of difficulties concerning the “imperfect rhymes” identified in Chapter 15.

4. Various Treatments of ME /u/

4.1 The Lengthening of ME Short /u/ to /u:/ before /ʃ/

I hope to have demonstrated in Chapter 16 that a short ME /i/ [i] pronunciation was retained and even lengthened in certain environments to [iː ~ i:] (*wit*, *little*, *river*, *critter*, *fish*, *dish*...) along with innovative developments involving breaking [i·ɪ]. Likewise, Lass suggests that ME short /u/ remained tense until at least the end of the 17th century, and I would support his argument that *pool* ~ *pull* were minimal pairs that differed only quantitatively (i.e. [u:] ~ [u]). Although Franklin distinguished between short and long /i:/ ~ /i/, he did not indicate whether his /u/ was long or short and this may be the reason.

I would see this as additional evidence that multiple dialectal systems were in constant competition over the centuries, as they still are today. In some varieties, there appear to have existed two environmentally-conditioned allophones featuring either [u(·) ~ u(·)] which could be fully lengthened.

Although this point of view is not often heard, Mazarin (2020, 4) also writes that his Type B dialects (late 16th and 17th centuries) had six short vowels /ɪ, e, æ, ʌ, ʏ, u/ and that most of them were “*probably tenser than their usual modern counterparts*” (my italics). Lass makes the same point above. For instance, just as for ME /i/ + /ʃ/, ME /u/ + /ʃ/ remained tense and was even lengthened to [u:] in certain words recorded in the 17th-century New England and New York town records. For instance, the Watertown records (Mass.) give *booshel* (1651) [ˈbu(:)ʃəl] (< OF *boissel*, 13th c.) for “bushel.” *Boolet* [ˈbu(:)lət] for “bullet” (1651) appears to retain the original French [u] pronunciation [ˈbule(t)] (borrowed 1550, originally meaning “cannon ball”). Similarly, a “fuller” of cloth is spelt *foolar* (related to French *foulard* “headscarf”), presumably [ˈfu(:)lə(ɹ)], in the Hanover records of New Hampshire (and not [ˈfʊləɹ] as in the “Fuller” family name) (quoted by Krapp, 1925, 150). In his *Biglow Papers*, Lowell gives *Rooshian*, presumably [ˈru:ʃjən] for “Russian,” and *doos* [du:z] for “does.” Having said, this [u ~ ʏ] cannot be ruled out here even at this late date.

In my own fieldwork, I have noted this pronunciation for “*push*” [pu:ʃ] and *bush* [bu:ʃ] (alongside *fish* [fi:ʃ], *dish* [di:ʃ] and *wish* [wi:ʃ]) in Jackson Co., southeastern Ohio, but also in the Virginia Shenandoah Valley (near Quicksburg). These realizations are also recorded in Ocracoke, the “Outer Banks” of North Carolina by Wolfram and Schelling (1997, 106). Shores points out that this feature is shared by the speakers of Tangier Island in the Chesapeake (2000, 185).

In her 1895 novel, Alicia Leith gives this pronunciation for Somerset:

“*Dumb and voolish, blooshen red as pinnies...* (p. 53) but also *drooshes* (p. 67) for “thrushes.” Shorrocks (1998, 173-174) gives similar examples for Bolton, Lancashire, where ME short u is realized as a high, front, partially rounded [y:]: *bush* [bʏ:ʃ], *rush* [ɹʏ:ʃ], *brush* [bɹʏ:ʃ], *hush* [ɥ:ʃ], *cushion* [ˈkʏ:ʃɪn]. The SED also offers examples for Cheshire and Derbyshire, regions which were once Quaker strongholds and Pennsylvania and Delaware were probably gateways for the introduction of this feature into North America. Notice that Dobson (1968), in his discussion of Sir Thomas Smith, states that he had pointed out that in Derbyshire, people were pronouncing “bull” with front rounded [y] [byl], not far from Shorrocks’s account.

Also see the confusion between *bull* ~ *ball*, *wool* ~ *wall* all pronounced [ʊ:l] on Tangier Island (Shores, 2000, 183) and the Outer Banks of North Carolina (Schilling-Estes & Wolfram, 1997, 107). More on this in Chapter 22.

Interestingly, Hall (1942, 36) describes /ʊ/ as being pronounced “a shade more fronted and tense” than in GA. His examples are *bull*, *pulpit*... and also *good*, *took*, *book*, *look* (see ME /ɔ:/ <oo> below for more details and northern English examples of *look*, *took*, etc.) which preserves a trace of this former *Strut-Foot* “non-split.”

These scattered examples are all reflexes of pronunciations that were certainly used more extensively but which, by the 19th century, were never necessarily dominant in any one dialect. The fact that ME /u/ (*Strut* words) and ME /i/ (*Kit* words) are lengthened before [ʃ] in both England and America suggests that this feature predates the colonial settlements. Considering the wide distribution of [u:ʃ] in the United States, the phenomenon was obviously common to many developing colonial koines during the 17th and 18th centuries and, very likely, was a characteristic of Franklin’s own paritary Boston register. Conclusion: if the “sharedness principle” has any merit, it would suggest that it was common enough to have been retained by the majority of the founder generation and their offspring. Nevertheless, I have found no trace of this in Franklin’s poetry or in his orthographic reform (cf. Chapters 25 and 26).

4.2 ME Short /u/ [u ~ ʊ] > [ɪ ~ ɛ]

The Hanover records (New Hampshire) have *adjist* [əˈdʒɪst] for “adjust” (1792). The Plymouth Records have *jedged* [ˈdʒɛdʒd] for “judged” (1708) and the *Three Military Diaries* text has *jest* [dʒɛst] for “just” (cited by Krapp, 1925, 165). These three words are all of French origin, however, and OF *juger* [ʒyʒɛ(r)], for instance, would presumably have been borrowed into English as [dʒydʒ] > [dʒydʒ] and, with progressive unrounding and fronting, [dʒɪdʒ ~ ɔʒɪðʒ]. The lowering of [ɪ] > [ɛ] would have given [dʒɛdʒ] following the process observed in Chapter 14, particularly in areas such as Suffolk.

Directly or indirectly, Franklin's rhymes show several examples of this kind. For instance, although he spells <just> in the traditional fashion, the rhyme below indicates he pronounced *just* [dʒest] (*Poor Richard's Almanack*, 1740).

What is a butterfly? At *best*
He's but a caterpillar *drest*.
The gaudy Fop's his picture *just*.

Interestingly, elsewhere we see Franklin's rhyme of *trust* ~ *just*, which I would wager were both realized as [ʔ ~ ɹ], just a shade above [ʌ], showing once again his ability to juggle with variant pronunciations to fit his rhymes.

Nevertheless, this [ɪ ~ ɛ] pronunciation (< short ME /u/) appears very early in native English words as well.¹⁴ This point was examined in Chapter 12 on koineization and to stress the degree of linguistic continuity of EME features in early and modern America. For instance, Dobson (1968, 45) states that Cheke (circa 1540) has *schit* for "shut," and both John Cheke and Sir Thomas Smith give *mich* and *sich* for "much" and "such." Webster also records these pronunciations in his *Dissertations* (1789, 388-389) writing:

The vulgar pronunciation of *such* is *sich*. This is but a small deviation from the ancient elegant pronunciation, which was *swich* or *swiche*, as the word is spelt in Chaucer. Such is the force of national practice: And altho the country people in New England, sometimes drawl their words in speaking, and, like their brethren, often make false concord, yet their idiom is purely Saxon or English...

Note the reference to drawling suggest that the vowel was lengthened and probably tense, perhaps resembling [si-tʃʔ).

Wright (1905, 626) also gives "such" as being pronounced [sɪtʃ], in the North mainly (Lancashire, Yorkshire...) but, for our purposes, Lincolnshire, Rutland, Northamptonshire (Franklin's father's home county), Suffolk, Norfolk, Essex, Kent, Surrey, Hampshire, Dorset, Devonshire, Cornwall as well as areas of the West Midlands.

Wright (1905, 496), for instance, records "just" pronounced with either [ɪ] or [ɛ] over vast areas of England: [dʒest] for Lincolnshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Sussex, Kent, Hampshire, Devon... [dʒɪst] for Durham, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Warwickshire, Gloucestershire, Bedfordshire... [setʃ] is given for Leicestershire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire and Norfolk. Here are three lines from Lowell's *Biglow Papers* (1848) portraying the Boston area vernacular:

14 Old English (Kentish, East Anglian dialects), possessed a front rounded /y:/, as in French, and <u> was also pronounced [y] in some EME dialects (cf. Wallis, 1653). The process of fronting proposed for the French loanwords may also have resulted from a similar unrounding of [y] in native English words to [i ~ ɪ] and occasional lowering to [ɛ]. /y/ survived longest in West Saxon.

Who ever'd ha' thought *sech* a pisonous rig
 Would be run by a chap thet wuz chose fer a Wig?
 "We knowed wut his principles wuz 'fore we sent him"?

Lowell (1848) gives *resh* for "rush" [ɹɛʃ ~ ɹɛ.ʃ?] in the Boston area. Such variant pronunciations of ME short /u/ in these environments provide a range of fronted realizations that spanned a panoply of vowels: [ɪ ~ ɛ ~ ɛ̃ ~ ɛ]. All were commonly heard in 18th-century America and were certainly part of the original founding feature pool.

Once again, Hall (1942, 40) provides examples in the Smokies where he writes "[ɪ] often appears" in the following examples: *such* [sɪtʃ], *just* [dʒɪst] (cf. *kiver*, *diskiver*, etc. under short ME o). Likewise, Shorrocks (1998, 217) gives *such* [sɪtʃ] and *much* [mɪtʃ] for Bolton, Lancashire but, recall that such English dialectal pronunciations are not limited to the Northwest Midlands. Wright (1905) gave the source of *kiver* in the East Midlands of England.

Considering the number of examples, I view the ultimate source of these pronunciations in New England and in the Appalachians to be another clear inheritance from earlier 17th-century English pronunciations of specific vowels and diphthongs that were still common until well into the 20th century in large parts of England.

Note in passing that in modern US English, standard "whipped" vs vernacular "whupped" provide an example of this kind of [ɪ] ~ [ʊ] variation, with the latter being associated with southern US English today.¹⁵

4.3 ME /ur/ > [ɛɪ], [ʊɪ] or [əɪ]

As mentioned above, Mazarin (2020, 10) writes that the short vowel *Strut* [ʊ] developed into [ɪ] during the 17th century, so that we see ME /ur/ [ʊɪ] was lowered under the influence of /r/ to [ʊɪ ~ ɹɪ] and finally lowered to [ɪɪ] and [əɪ] in some varieties, but certainly not all. We saw such examples in my transcription of Wilkins' Apostles' Creed.

Parallel to this, we saw that ME /ir/ and ME /ɛr/ were also lowered and, according to the general consensus, centralized first to [ɹɪ] (cf. Wilkins above) or via [ʊɪ] and then to [ɪɪ ~ əɪ] following a process discussed in Chapters 16 and 17 (e.g. *forst* "first"). According to Mazarin (ibid.) the final result was the "merging" of words such as *fir*, *fern*, *fur* "into a single lexical set, the key word of which is NURSE [ɪɪ ~ əɪ]."

Even though there are copious examples of this process of centralization in

15 There is a semantic difference however with "to whip" implying "to strike with a whip" or, in vernacular American English, "to defeat." In my experience in Virginia, for instance, "to whup" is viewed as substandard, normally meaning to "beat up," or "to roundly defeat an opponent in a physical confrontation, a fist fight or otherwise."

the 17th-century New England and New York town records with <ur> spellings representing [əɪ ~ ʌɪ], these same records show that <ur> can also be fronted and lowered to [ɛɪ]. For instance, “turn” is spelt *tern* [tɛɪn] (1694), “turret” is spelt *teret* [ˈtɛɪɛt ~ ˈtɛɪɪt] (1708) and *retern* [ɹiˈtɛɪn ~ ɹɛˈtɛɪn] is given for “return” (1709) in the Plymouth town records. □

Again, such examples are often of French origin and, just as explained above for *just*, *judge*, etc., may originally have resulted from the unrounding and fronting of French /y/ > [ʏ] > [i] > [ɪ] followed by subsequent lowering to [ɛ]. This could explain examples such as “Turkey” spelt *Tirke* [ˈtɪɹkɛ] (1710), which remained at the first stage of development (i.e. before the lowering to [ɛ]) (cf. Krapp, 1925, 170-171 and Orbeck, 1927, 31).

With the exception of Scotland, however, Wright (1905, 658) gives no contemporary English [ɛɪ] pronunciations for *turn* nor are there any examples of *burn* with [ɛɪ], *brun* being the most common dialectal form (ibid., 359). Wright gives the following [ɛɪ] examples for Scotland: *herb* [ɛɪb] (p. 482), *birth* [bɛɪθ] (p. 332), *girl* [gɛɪl], *stern* [stɛɪn] (p. 619).

Compare Scottish [stɛɪn] to Lowell’s New England pronunciation: *stem* to *starn* [stɛɪn ~ stɑɪn], suggesting another example of lowering from [ɛɪ] > [æɪ] > [ɑɪ]. Lowell also presents “birthright” as *barthright*, a pronunciation which from all the evidence we have examined must have been current in Massachusetts before the mid-19th century. We saw in Chapter 16 that Duponceau (1818, 252) gives evidence that <ir> was pronounced as a lowered, front vowel which he describes as [æɪ] (recall the *bird* ~ *bard* minimal pairs representing [bæɪd] and [bæɪɹd] distinguished solely according to length). Like Webster, he too considered the centralized [ʌɪ ~ əɪ] pronunciation to be “vulgar.” Having said that, there are many examples of r-lessness in the 17th-century town records: *bud* [bəɪd ~ bɜɪd] for “bird” Huntington records (NY), 1676 (cf. Chapters 23 and 27).

In Chapter 18, we saw the same pathway to [ʌɪ ~ əɪ] via [æɪ ~ ɑɪ] which may have marked a halfway point to [ɑɪ ~ ɒɪ] > [əɪ]. This would have been facilitated by r-colouring and, in particular, the centralizing effects of retroflex [ɹ], further evidence suggesting that the dominant colonial pronunciation of /r/ was not apical. Above, we saw in the New England and New York records examples such as “confirmed” spelt *confarmed* (1683) and *confurmed* (1682) (Groton records, Mass.) as well as *thard* [θæɪd ~ θɑɪd] (1664) (Hempstead records, NY), next to *thurd* [θʌɪd ~ θəɪd] (1671) (Watertown records, Mass.) and so on, showing once again that these [æɪ] vs [ʌɪ ~ əɪ] variants were part of the 17th-century feature pool.

As we have mentioned on several occasions, it is precisely the [ɛɪ] pronunciation that Noah Webster advocated in his *Dissertations* (1789, 105) rather than the centralized pronunciations which he associated with London English: “Another very common error, among the yeomanry of America, and

particularly in New England, is the pronouncing of *e* before *r*, like *a*; as *marcy* for *mercy*... To avoid this disagreeable singularity some fine speakers have run into another extreme, by pronouncing *e* before *r*, like *u*, *murcy*. This is an error. The true sound of the short *e*, as in *let*, is the correct and elegant pronunciation of this letter in all words of this class.”

5. The New England Poets: <our>, <or> and <ur> [ʊɪ ~ əɪ]

The rhymes matching <or> ~ <ur> by all the New England poets would suggest that a slightly different route was followed by the New England poets. I base this appraisal on Franklin’s own transcription of *storm* and other <or> words which he distinctly presents as [stɔɪm ~ stəɪm] in his 1768 reform (cf. Chapters 25 and 26) which represents more innovative form than [æɪ ~ aɪ] discussed above. As we saw from the extract of the “Lord’s Prayer” transcribed by John Wilkins in Chapter 13, he too pronounced <or> words in the same way: *born* [bɔɪm] as did Bullokar and Cooper (Dobson, 1968, 745).

Dwight rhymes *morn* ~ *turn* which, logically, could be interpreted several ways in this context:

- a. [mɔɪm] ~ [tɹɪm] (imperfect rhyme)
- b. *[mɹɪm] ~ [tɹɪm] (improbable; although cf. Barnes’s [məɪm] for “mourn” for Dorset!)
- c. [mɔɪm] ~ [tɔɪm].

I am assuming that the most likely choice is the last one since Barlow pairs not only *morn* ~ *burn* but also *adorn* ~ *urn*, *adorn* ~ *return* as well as *mourn* (OE *murnan*) ~ *return*. <Wor> words, *world*, *word*, *worth*, were all pronounced [ʊɪ] at the time (at least by educated New Englanders) but it is clear that the shift to [əɪ] had already been under way for over a century as we can see from the spelling of *wurk* for “work” in the Watertown Records, Mass. (1672).

Like Barlow, Franklin also rhymed *word* ~ *afford* where he manifestly still pronounced *word* [wɔɪd] (cf. ME /or/ below).

Kind Katharine to her husband kiss’d these *words*,
 “Mine own sweet Will, how dearly I love thee!”
 If true (quoth Will) the World no such *affords*. (1733)

//kɹɪnd 'kæθəɪm tɔ hɐɪ 'hɹzbənd 'kɪst ðeːz 'wɔɪdz/ (paritary register)
 mɹɪn ɔn swɛːt wɪl / hɹu dɛːɪləɪ ɹɪ lɹv ði /
 ɪf tɹu / kʊθ wɪl / ðə wɔɪld nɔ setʃ ə'fɔɪdz //¹⁶

16 [ɹɪ] and [ɹu] could be replaced here by [əɪ] and [əu].

Easy Converse Mirth *afford*,
Artless Plenty fill the *Board*; 1750)

//ɛːzəi kɒnvɛɪs mɜrθ ə'fɔɪd/
ɜrtlɪs plɛntəi fɪl ðə bɔɪd//

In the section on ME /ur/, we saw that <ur> words are matched with <or> words in Franklin, Barlow and Dwight's poems. In the example just cited, if "affords" is pronounced [a'fɔɪdz], then "words" must be realized as [ʊɔɪdz]. Therefore, one can assume that in the following couplet, he pronounced both *absurd* and *word* as [ʊɔɪd] and [ab'sɔɪd]:

A Flatterer never seems *absurd*:
The Flatter'd always take his *Word*. (1740)

Franklin's use of a triple rhyme involving *turn*, *burn* and *adorn* suggests that all three words are being pronounced [ɔɪ].

Hail Night serene! thro' Thee where'er we *turn*
Our wond'ring Eyes, Heav'n's Lamps profusely *burn*;
And Stars unnumber'd all the Sky *adorn*.

Likewise, if one accepts this interpretation, *turn* [tɔɪn] would thus rhyme with *burn* [bɔɪn] and [ə'dɔɪn]. Recall that in current Massachusetts English *adorn* is pronounced [ə'dɑːn] with r-loss, which would appear to preserve something of the former pronunciation. Alexander Pope, Franklin's contemporary, offers the same rhyme in Part II of his "From an Essay on Criticism," *worn* ~ *turn*, with both words presumably realized as [ɔɪ].

By extension, *curse* and *worse* would both seem to be pronounced with [ɔɪ] here.

Eternal *Scold* she *was*, and *what* is *worse*,
The D—l burn thee, was her common *Curse*. (1735)

An open Foe may prove a *curse*;
But a pretended friend is *worse*. (1740)

The fact that Dwight rhymes *mourn* and *forlorn* suggests that *mourn* is also pronounced [mɔɪn ~ mɑɪn].

Too late he sees, and sees to *mourn*,
His race of every hope *forlorn*,

Likewise, Barlow rhymes *borne* and *mourn*, also with [ɔɪ ~ ɑɪ].

From realms of promised peace forever *borne*,
I hail mute anguish, and in secret *mourn*.

Franklin, however, rhymes *mourn* with *return*, offering another indication that

<ur> could have been pronounced [ʊɪ] or a variant of it:

Sad Heraclitus, serious Wretch, *return*;
In louder Grief, our greater Crimes to *mourn*. (1743)

Franklin rhymes not only *discourse* ~ *worse* in the following quatrain, reinforcing the evidence in favour of an [ʊɪ] pronunciation of <ourse> and <ors> spellings.

Lalus who loves to hear himself *discourse* (1736)
Keeps talking still as if he frantick were,
And tho' himself might no where hear a *worse*,
Yet he no other but himself will hear.¹⁷

Note also the [ɛ:ɪ ~ ɛ:ɪ] realizations for *were* and *hear* in lines 2 and 4. In passing and in a similar vein, Grandgent (1899, 239) points out that *were* was also pronounced <war> [wæɪ ~ wɑ:ɪ] in his day. As we have seen, the drift towards [æɪ] in such environments was frequent in New England as it was elsewhere in the colonies (Virginia, Pennsylvania and, later, Appalachia).

The assonance of *scold* [skɔld] (vs *scald* [skæld]), *was* [ʊɔz] and *what* [huɔt] in the first line and *burn* [bɔ:n], *was* [ʊɔz] and *common* ['kɒmən] and *curse* [kɔ:ɪs] in the second, might add some weight to this hypothesis. Nevertheless, note that, elsewhere, Franklin rhymes “what” with “not” [nɒt] but also “what” [(h)wɔt?] with “that” [ðæt?]. This is another example of his ability to code-switch when it suited his rhymes: [(h)wæt ~ (h)wɔt] vs [(h)wɒt]. Recall that <wh> and <w> was pronounced as [hu-] and [u-] in “careful” speech (cf. Chapters 23 and 27). Another example is of <ur> pronounced [ʊɪ] is seen in the following rhyme:

From Suretyship, and from an empty *Purse*,
A Smoaky Chimney and a jolting *Horse*; (1734)

Note that the curious spelling of “smoky” here could be a sign of New England short o [ʏ] in this word. Given the number of these rhymes, the implication is indeed that <ur> words were, at this time, very close to [ʊɪ]. As we shall now see, [ʌɪ ~ əɪ] variants were also common from the earliest periods of settlement but their use simply cannot be envisaged here.

Orbeck (1927, 30) may give partial confirmation to this hypothesis regarding Franklin's own pronunciation of *Nurse* words, although the spellings could reflect a broad phonetic range of [ɛɪ ~ æɪ ~ ʌɪ ~ ʊɪ]. Again, the final stage which came to dominate is centralized [ʌɪ ~ əɪ]. The [ɛɪ] hypothesis may be borne out by raised examples such as *quarter* ['kweɪtəɪ] for “quarter” (Dedham, 1696) (and see *Tirke* above) next to “quorter” ['kɔ:ɪtəɪ].

With Duponceau's descriptions of <ir> and <er> spellings, one might suspect a pronunciation in the area of [æɪ]. Nevertheless, the town records yield a

¹⁷ Note the *were* ~ *hear* rhyme with both words pronounced [ɛɪ ~ ɛ:ɪ].

number of <or> spellings for <ir> and <er> which seems to support a lowered realization: *porsons* [ˈpɔːsənz] for “persons” (Groton, 1683), *forst* [fɔːst] (Groton, 1682), *sorcomstanced* [ˈsɔːɪcəmˈstæːnst] (Dedham, 1662), *aformative* [æˈfɔːmətɪv] “affirmative” (Dedham, 1703) ... also suggesting [ɔː] pronunciations.

Note that the latter is also spelt *afarmative* [əˈfæːmətɪv] (Dedham, 1703) and there are many more examples of this kind: *parchis* [ˈpæːtʃɪs ~ ˈpaːtʃɪs] (Groton, 1693) and *patchis* [ˈpæːtʃɪs ~ ˈpaːtʃɪs] (with r-loss) (Groton, 1685) for “purchase”, *farther* [ˈfæːðə ~ ˈfaːðə] for “further” (Dedham, 1643), but also *confarmed* [kɒnˈfæːmd ~ kɒnˈfaːmd] for “confirmed” (Groton, 1682), *atarny* [əˈtæːni ~ əˈtaːni] for “attorney” (Groton, 1685).

5.1 New England Examples of Centralization to [əɪ] (<ir> Words)

In Chapter 16 we cited examples taken from the New England and New York records showing centralization of <ir>, <er> and <ur> words to a position in the area of [əɪ ~ ʌɪ]. For instance, the Groton town records give both *furst* [fʌɪst ~ fəɪst] (1664) (cf. *forst* [fɔːst] 1682 above), as we have just seen, and this last Massachusetts example favours the interpretation that a lowered backed pronunciation of <ir> spellings was at one point during the 17th century, probably the 18th century, part of the New England feature pool, even if it was not the majority pronunciation. The question is whether it was part of Franklin own personal phonetic system. These same records give *thurty* [ˈθəɪti] (1682), *pursin* [ˈpəɪsɪn] for “person” (1686) (cf. *porsons* [ˈpɔːsənz] for Groton, 1683 above), *confurmed* [kɒnˈfəɪmd] for “confirmed” (1685). Likewise, the Watertown records (Mass.) have *burds* [bəɪdz] for “birds” (1669), *shurts* [ʃəɪts] for “shirts” (1671), *furst* [fəɪst] for “first,” *thurd* [θəɪd] for “third” (1671). The Huntington records (NY) give *bud* [bəːd ~ bɜːd] for “bird” with r-loss (1676) as well as *durt* [dəɪt] for “dirt” (1681) (Lowell gives *dut* [də(:)t ~ dɜ(:)t] for “dirt” with r-loss!), *thurd* [θəɪd] for “third” (1664) while the Hempstead records (NY) (Krapp, 1925, p. 172) also have *thurd* [θəɪd] for “third” (1660) along with *thurty* [ˈθəɪti] (1665), *surtify* [ˈsəɪtiˌfəɪ] for “certify” (1670) and *purmit* [pəɪˈmɪt] for “to permit” (1657).

To conclude this section, the pathway to centralization for orthographic <ir> and <er> appears to have been [ɛɪ] [æɪ] [aɪ] [ɑɪ] ~ [ɔɪ] > [əɪ] while, for <or> and <ur>, it may have followed a much more direct route [ɔːɪ] > [əɪ].

21. High-Mid and Low-Mid Back Vowels: ME /ɔ:/, ME /ɔ:/, ME /ɔ/

Introduction

This chapter concentrates on high-mid and low-mid back vowels which pose particularly difficult problems of interpretation both dialectally and diachronically. Although some of the more complex issues are not completely resolved here, once again, the combined data from the orthoepists, the colonial town records, the New England poets' rhyme schemes and 19th- and 20th-century English and American dialectal data meld together quite nicely to answer a good number of questions that have sometimes been overlooked.

Low-Mid and Low-Back Vowels: Principles and Obstacles

Before proceeding with this discussion, I would like to signal a few contradictory and potentially confusing interpretations of the quantitative and qualitative values in the use of IPA symbols in the interpretation of mid and low back vowels: [ɔ:], [ɒ:], [ɑ:]. As we shall see, since the beginning of the late 19th century, American and English linguists have had different readings of the phonetic value of /ɔ:/ (overwhelmingly [ɑ: ~ ɒ:] in GA English and [ɔ:] in RP English). This is particularly confusing for foreign speakers of English. It has also led to misinterpretations about the historical development of low mid and low back vowels with many British linguists assuming that /ɔ:/ was the original realization of *Thought* and *Law* words.

This also has direct repercussions on American and English interpretations of the phonemic boundaries between GA and RP /ɔ:/, /ɒ:/ and /ɑ:/.¹ Many of the points that are raised here run parallel to the discussion in the introduction to mid front vowels and IPA symbols discussed in Chapter 17. In the context of the

1 Traces of this confusion may explain the differing interpretations of ME [ɔ:], with Dobson transcribing it as [ɒ:] and Lass and Görlach as [ɔ:]...

diachronic discussions, we have seen that the ME phonological system possessed two levels of front and back mid vowels which were respectively high-mid and low-mid. In the latter case, this gave high-mid /o:/ and low-mid /ɔ:/. Just as I have transcribed ME high-mid /e:/ as [ɛ:] throughout, I have also indicated high-mid /o:/ as [ɔ:] to avoid any possible ambiguity.

In his classic *The English Language in America*, George Krapp (1925, 141) described the American pronunciation of /ɔ:/ (his symbol) in words such as *thought* and *law* explaining that it is “unrounded, scarcely distinguishable from [ɑ].” Notice that Krapp transcribes both vowels as being short here whereas English linguists correctly indicate this GA vowel as being long.² This is linked to the fact that American linguists have tended to ignore vowel length in their transcriptions. Note also that Krapp does not use the [ɒ:] (or [ɒ]) IPA character and only indicates /ɑ:/ and /ɔ:/ as phonemes. I interpret his /ɔ:/ to have the same value as his missing [ɒ:] vowel, just as in older east coast American varieties.³ A few years before this, Grandgent gives it the open [ɑ:] value (Grandgent, 1899). To conclude, I interpret Krapp’s unrounded [ɔ:] as being the equivalent of contemporary IPA [ɒ:] in words that are normally spelt <-aught>, <-ought>, <-aw>, <-all>, etc.

The gap in the system thus appears to be due to this early interpretation of “unrounded” GA /ɔ:/ which was clearly distinct from *rounded* RP /ɔ:/. Furthermore, the partially-rounded French interpretation of /ɔ/ is also of some significance when considering the interpretations of early grammarians such as Duncan MacKintosh (1797), who wrote in French. Mazarin (2020, 15, footnote 19) makes the important observation that

Sweet and Wyld used italic <ɔ> for LOT [ɒ] (“low-back, wide-round”). Even Daniel Jones (1917: p. xi) confessedly used short ɔ for LOT [ɒ] in his own “broad” transcriptions. The symbol comes from Ellis’s Palaeotype for [ɒ].

This is further evidence that the confusion between [ɔ] and [ɒ] goes back a long way. If Mazarin is correct, and I believe that he is, the source of this mix-up appears to be here.

In the first edition of his 1990 *Longman’s Pronouncing Dictionary of the English Language Dictionary*, J. C. Wells took account of this anomaly in words like *thought* and *law*. In this way, he made a clear distinction between RP English phonemic /ɔ:/ and General American phonemic /ɒ:/, rightly treating them as two separate phonemes. His phonetic transcriptions of these two words in this edition thus allowed for [ɒ:] and [ɑ:] allophones of /ɒ:/. He also points out

2 Otherwise, Krapp systematically distinguishes between long and short vowels in his transcriptions.

3 Grandgent (1899), using the American Dialect Society’s phonetic system also uses the /ɔ/ symbol with a value corresponding to low unrounded IPA [ɒ].

that phonemic distinction between [ɒ:] and [ɑ:] in *Thought* and *Lot* words has broken down in American English and that [ɑ:] has now become the dominant pronunciation for most Americans today for *Thought*, *Law* and *Lot* words.

There is considerable variability in GenAm vowels in the open back area, Longman Pronouncing Dictionary follows tradition in distinguishing the vowel of *lot* lɑ:t from that of *thought* θɒ:t (note, though, that other books generally use the symbols ɑ, ɔ, ɒ, ɔh, ɔh respectively). However, some Americans do not distinguish these two vowels in both sets of words; so a secondary American English pronunciation with [ɑ:] is given for all words having [ɒ:]. LPD also makes provision for a difference between the vowel of *thought* θɒ:t and that of *north* nɔ:θ (the symbol [ɔ:] implying a closer quality, like RP ɔ:, being shown for AmE only after r); but many speakers do not make an appreciable difference between these qualities. Words like *force* [fɔ:rs] / [fɒ:rs] are shown in LPD with a secondary pronunciation involving [o:] (an allophone of ɒu and appreciably closer than the ɔ: of words like *north*); nevertheless, the majority of Americans use the same vowel sound in “force” as in “north,” as implied by the main AmE pronunciation given. (Wells, 1990, xiv)⁴

For a reason unknown to me, Wells reverted to transcribing words like *thought* and *law* as GA /θɔ:t/ and /lɔ:/ in the later editions of his LPD thus eliminating the phonemic distinction with /θɒ:t/ made in his 1990 edition. In the introduction to this 2005 edition, however, Wells rewrites the introduction as follows, replacing /ɒ:/ with /ɔ:/:

There is considerable variability in GenAm vowels in the open back area. LPD follows tradition in continuing to distinguish the vowel of *lot* lɑ:t and that of *thought* θɔ:t. (Note, though that books by American scholars generally do not use length marks.) However, fewer and fewer Americans distinguish these two vowels sounds from one another; so a secondary pronunciation with ɑ: is given for all words having ɔ: (except before r). (Wells, 2005, p. xv)

In other words, even though they share the same phoneme /ɑ:/, American *Lot* and *Thought* words are now artificially distinguished, not on the basis of the GA system but, apparently, because it has been calqued on RP. In his 2005 edition, Wells only records the dominant [ɑ:] pronunciations for these words (to the exclusion of [ɒ:]) for the reason explained above. We thus have a phonemic rendering of /θɔ:t/ and /lɔ:/ and a phonetic representation of these words as [θɑ:t] and [lɑ:].

Nevertheless, /ɒ:/ and /ɑ:/ are still phonemic for some older American speakers even if, as Krapp pointed out long ago, the phonemic distinction has been lost for most.⁵ See my transcription of an aged New Bedford Massachusetts

4 Thorax [θɔ:ræks] and [θɒ:ræks]; also: where RP has ʌr followed by a vowel, most Americans use ɜr: [kɜ:rɪdʒ] vs [kʌrɪdʒ]. I transcribe this [ɜr:] in GA as [ə:] or [əɪ].

5 For instance, I have recorded a native of New Bedford, Massachusetts (born in 1921), who maintained this phonemic distinction in words such as *taught* /tɔ:t/ and *tot* /tɑ:t/, or *caught*

man's pronunciation of *Caught* and *Cot* below (born in 1921). We shall see, however, that this blurring of boundaries is clearly not recent and may predate the American Revolution and this may have been the case in 18th century English dialects too (cf. Mazarin, 2020).

In the 2012 edition of his *Cambridge English Pronouncing Dictionary*, Peter Roach also adopted the position of recording the phonemic transcription of RP and GA *thought* as /ɔ:/ but, contrary to the former, he maintained the two phonetic variables of the *thought* and *law* vowel, recording them as either [ɑ:] or [ɔ:] and stating that “there is no /ɒ/ vowel in GA” (Roach, 2012, ix). Therefore, like Krapp before him, and now Wells, he also excludes /ɒ:/ from the GA system. Having said this, as he clearly states (p. xv), the “phoneme principle” is the rule that is adopted in his dictionary. My point here is not to criticize what are two wonderful resources for learners of English and for native speakers themselves, but to point out that users may wonder why GA can have two significantly different IPA symbols for the same word. For example, Roach transcribes “thought” with either [ɑ:] or [ɔ:], while Wells gives only [ɑ:]. Secondly, another question is the precise phonetic value of Wells and Roach's /ɔ:/ phoneme (in relation to the /ɒ:/ of Wells' 1990 edition).

As we shall see in section 1 of this chapter, it is interesting to observe that, from a historical perspective, the American [ɒ: ~ ɑ:] pronunciation retains the older EME pronunciations of *law* and *thought*. Mazarin (2020, 15) offers a precise account of the history of *thought* asserting that the oldest realization of the ME /au/ was [ɑ:] with partial rounding of the vowel to [ɒ:] arising only in the course of the 18th century, hence my own hesitation between these two variants in describing Franklin's RMS (cf. Chapter 26) and elsewhere. In addition, English and Australian varieties share this same pronunciation, suggesting it was once the dominant pronunciation at the time of the settlement of America and Australia.

As it turns out, although it is not necessarily a recent innovation in my mind, the English /ɔ:/ phoneme was first formally introduced into the RP system, by Daniel Jones in the 1917 edition of his *English Pronouncing Dictionary* (cf. Mazarin, 2020, 14). Mazarin explains it as follows:

By the late 1800s, the merged TAUGHT–NORTH–CLOTH phoneme in RP had risen almost as high as cardinal [ɔ:], where it further merged with FORCE, which had lowered earlier in the century (see Section 6.2). In 1917, Daniel Jones frankly symbolized this new British vowel as low-mid IPA ɔ:.

Here again, many Americans still pronounce *Force* [fɔ:ɹs] just as it was in earlier centuries, alongside [fɒ:ɹs], which was most likely Franklin's realization of it.

/kɒ:t/ and *cot* /kɑ:t/, although from a phonetic perspective, I find the difference is barely noticeable.

Considering that American English was a less prestigious colonial variety of British English at the time, it is not impossible that Daniel Jones (and other linguists, including Grandgent and Krapp) assumed that this /ɔ:/ reflected the older, educated 18th-century English pronunciation from which, as many still believe, American English pronunciations had deviated. Moreover, on account of the aura surrounding RP English around the world (cf. Chapter 10), /ɔ:/ quickly gained acceptance as the prescriptively sanctioned model among many well-educated, RP-leaning Americans during the first quarter of the 20th century. Listening to American speakers such as Eleanor Roosevelt or William Buckley, we are often struck by this. They did pronounce this vowel as a fully rounded RP /ɔ:/ (For a discussion of American adherence to proto-RP and early 20th-century RP pronunciation, see Chapter 30).⁶

As Mazarin has demonstrated, the oldest attested pronunciation of *Taught* words is in fact [ɑ:]. I came to this same conclusion through the study of Franklin's RMS and Grandgent and MacKintosh's descriptions as well as those of English orthoepists such as Kenrick (1773), Nares (1784) and Walker (1791), all of whom associate the sound with French <â>. It is thus a quality and quantity that has been with us since at least the 17th century settlement period (perhaps alongside partially rounded [ɒ:]). The competition between [ɒ:] and [ɑ:] in English has a long history and is not an American innovation as has often been supposed.

1.1 Vowel Length in RP and GA

As alluded to above, Wells (2005, xv) states in the above citation that American phoneticians tend not to indicate vowel length in their transcriptions whereas the British do. In his *Accents of English*, however, Wells (1990, 345) also explains that "In general, vowel length is not important phonologically in the West (i.e. West Country) as it is in other parts of England." This explanation may explain the logic of American linguists and, if so, this implies another possible inherited link.

Nevertheless, in Chapter 26, we shall see that, if we interpret his system literally, vowel length *was* indeed phonemic as it may have been in Franklin's own speech. For instance, using his proto-phonemic system, he transcribed **did** [did] for "did" and **diid** [di:d] for "deed," **sin** [sin] for "sin" and **siin** for "seen" (cf. Chapter 16). However, Vaughan (Franklin, 1779, 470, footnote) questions the real quality of the vowel of "affected" pronunciation of **mem** [mɛm] "ma'am" ~ **meem** [mɛ:m] "maim."

Unfortunately, most American dictionaries use terribly antiquated phonetic notation systems. It has thus been largely left to British linguists to determine

⁶ Note also native New Yorkers' diphthongal realization of *Taught* words as [ɔɑ].

the subtleties regarding vowel length but, to repeat, sometimes in a way that places GA in a position subordinate to RP.

1.2 Strong and Weak Postvocalic Consonants

Wells (1990, 2005) and Roach (2012) transcribe GA *Lot* with long [ɑ:]. But if so, some General American speakers might wonder why “sad,” for example, is not also transcribed as [sæ:d] given that, at least to my ear, American “lax” vowels tend to be considerably longer than their RP counterparts. I explain in Chapter 16 that “laxness” is not the main criterion but rather lengthening (i.e. ME /i/ remained “tense” qualitatively (closer to French /i/) until the 18th century at least and can still be heard in certain environments in southern American states accompanied by “breaking”).

The tendency in GA is that the so-called lax vowels in American English, although longer than in RP, are somewhat shorter before voiceless consonants, stops and fricatives, for instance, than they are before voiced consonants. For instance, my impression is that the vowel of *tap*, *tat*, *tack* is appreciably longer (again, in my experience) than the short RP [æ] pronunciation of these same words. This is quite obvious in northern England where *tap*, *tat*, *tack* would be significantly shorter as [tap], [tat], [tak]. This is particularly true when GA speakers pronounce /æ/ before postvocalic voiced stops in words such as *tab*, *tad* and *tag* which I would transcribe as [tæ:b], [tæ:d] and [tæ:g] respectively.⁷

Here too, Wells (1989: 345) points out the same phenomenon in the West of England where he says “short vowels are lengthened in many environments, so that one may have pronunciations of the type [dɪ:d] for ‘did’, [stɛ:m] for ‘stem’, [fla:ʃ] for ‘flash’, [tɒ:p] for ‘top’, [pʊ:s] for ‘puss’.”

The same lengthening of /æ/ occurs before voiced fricatives, liquids and nasals. I would add, in the three cases, the vowels are lengthened when liquids and nasals are lenis. Other support for this assessment comes from MacMahon (1998, 406-407) who quotes Daniel Jones (1960,⁸ 235) as saying that “in the South of England a fully long [æ:] is generally used in the adjectives ending in -ad... and is quite common in some nouns.” MacMahon continues: “the traditionally short vowel appears to be lengthened in RP especially... in CAB, BAD, BAG, BADGE, JAM, MAN” (ibid.). So, the phenomenon can extend to RP as well, but the effects appear not to be quite as dramatic.

Finally, it is also possible that the GA transcription of *beer* /bɪɹ/, *bear* /beɹ/ [sic]

7 The same phenomenon, short vowels before fortis consonants and long vowels before lenis consonants, was demonstrated long ago for the Breton language by F. Falc’hun in his *Système Consonantique du Breton* (1951).

8 The date 1960 is apparently a typographical error for 1950. The citation appears in Daniel Jones, 1950. *The Pronunciation of English*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 265 (3rd ed. entirely revised, enl., and reset).

and *poor* /puɪ/, with short /ɪ/, /e/ (i.e. /ɛ/) and /ʊ/ also may have been conditioned by RP /bɪə/, /beə/ and /puə/. Although /bɪɪ/, /bɛɪ/ and /puɪ/ are indeed attested in the US, these pronunciations tend to be associated with the Great Lakes region and are far less common in North America than [bi:ɪ], [bɛ:ɪ] and [pu:ɪ]. *Poor* [pɔ:ɪ ~ pɔ̃:ɪ] tend to be viewed as “rural” or “southern” in my experience. In any case, these lengthened pronunciations are far more characteristic of both 18th century British and American English than their modern GA/RP equivalents.

This brings us back to the famous “drawl” that was condemned so vehemently by both Franklin and Webster (1789, 104). We also saw that “drawling,” the lengthening of elongated “lax” vowels and “breaking,” appear to be related and, I believe, these characteristics were an important element of the early colonial “feature pool.” We have seen that this phenomenon is closely associated with southern American English today. In past centuries, it was once common to all North American colonial English including New England. This point should also be kept in mind in the discussions to be broached below and in Chapters 22 and 23.

2. ME High-Mid /o:/ [ɔ:] > [u:]⁹

As explained in Chapter 17, the ME vocalic system has traditionally been analyzed by historians of the English language as consisting of two front and back mid-vowel phonemes: front high-mid /e:/ [ɛ:] and low-mid /ɛ:/ [ɛ:] and high-mid back /o:/ [ɔ:] and low-mid back /ɔ:/ [ɒ: ~ ɔ:] respectively. As I have already argued, this obscures the fact that the spoken vernacular Middle English vocalic system probably possessed key variables, namely, the “bridge vowels” [ɛ:] and [ɔ:], which permitted transitions that were instrumental to the GVS but also, and equally important, the lowering of front and back vowels in numerous contexts. In a similar way, allophones of each of the phonemes discussed in this account consisted of slight shades of difference which permitted the same kinds of transitions.

Depending on the dialect, these mid vowels could function as allophones of the corresponding high-mid or low-mid back phonemes. For this reason, the ME vocalic system would be more clearly represented phonetically within the framework of a three-way system involving the high-mid ME /ɔ:/ which possessed at least two environmentally-conditioned allophones: [ɔ: ~ ɔ̃:]. Likewise, cross-dialectally, low-mid /ɔ:/ also may have possessed several environmentally conditioned allophones [ɔ: ~ ɔ̃: ~ ɒ: ~ ɑ:]. The phonetic reflexes of this system survived well into the 18th century, but the picture was complicated, just as

9 Cross-linguistically, a three-way phonemic system exists in some dialects of modern Breton (Brythonic Celtic) /u:/, /ɔ:/, /ɔ̃:/ and /ɔ̃:/ (the latter with its French quality).

with the history of the front vowels, by their constant raising and lowering but also their erratic shortening (and lengthening of their short/lax counterparts). Taking into account these transition vowels offers the advantage of providing some flexibility to our analyses that, I believe, permits a clearer understanding of the way multiple dialectal systems have meshed over the centuries.

Significantly, just as we have seen with front high-mid front [e:] which, in some varieties, retained its pre-GVS pronunciation in numerous words until the 20th century, the GVS shift of ME /ɔ:/ did not occur systematically in all dialects. Some varieties may have retained the [ɔ:] pronunciation which would then have been shortened to [ɔ] and centralized to [ɤ ~ ɥ]. By the 16th century, and as stated above (cf. ME u), I believe that <o> ME /ɔ:/ had two principal allophones consisting of high-mid back [ɔ:] and mid [ɔ:] bridge vowel.

Like most English vowels, ME /ɔ:/ has had a rather chaotic history, especially when dialectal variation is factored in. We saw in Chapter 18 that the traditional account of the history of this vowel is that it had risen to [u:] by the year 1500. In Lass' discussion of ME short /u/, he refers to the shortening of [u:] > [u ~ ʊ] and its eventual centralization to [ʌ]. He tied this process to the parallel development of words such as *blood* and *flood* (Lass, 1999, 88-91). As can be seen by the reflexes of <oo> in present-day RP and GA English, *food* [u:], *foot* [ʊ], *blood/flood* [ʌ] (not to mention the many centralized dialectal variants of these), this shift appears to result from separate processes which, as I suggested in the section on ME /u/, coalesced in the standard language in ways which are still not fully understood. To repeat, Wells (1988, 198-199) demonstrated that, before shifting to /ʌ/, *blood*, *flood* were pronounced [ɤ], the process being as follows: [ɔ:] raised to [u:], shortened to [u], laxated to [ʊ], lowered to [ɤ] and then finally to [ʌ]. I shall argue that this [ɤ] pronunciation (alongside slightly lower [ɥ]) was arrested in 17th- and 18th-century New England and was almost certainly shared by Franklin and his compatriots.

As a reminder, the point was made in Chapter 20 that the *Strut-Foot* split, which occurred in many southern varieties of England towards the end of the 16th century, did not occur in the a large portion of the East and West Midlands stretching from Lincolnshire, including parts of East Anglia (cf. Chambers & Trudgill, 1980, 128; Wells, 1989, 336) and stretching to the Welsh border and into Gwent and Clwyd, Wales (Parry, 1999, 18) and, in a host of words such as *blood*, *flood*, *foot*, etc. (cf. below) parts of East Anglia (i.e. Norfolk) or in the North of England where Wells (1988, 132) specifies that [ɤ] is heard in "certain" northern English varieties (next to [ʊ]). It corresponds to my impressions of an ɔ-sounding pronunciation of *cup*, *sup*, etc. in parts of Lancashire.

The vocalic changes discussed here have thus occurred by degrees and according to phonetic environment and dialect. André Crépin (1994, 119) argued, for instance, that the centralization of *blood* and *flood* resulted from the

effects of initial /bl-/ and /fl-/ clusters and word-final /-d/. However, this does not explain the numerous examples of centralization of many other <oo> words in dialect (*foot*, *book*, *took*, etc.) that are normally pronounced [ʊ] in RP/GA. Once again, this reflects an RP-centred train of thought. Nor does it explain why *blood* and *flood* are still pronounced /ʊ/ in northern English varieties or why the SED records [flʌd] for “flood” in Norfolk (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 424).

By the 15th century, the base form of these <oo> words appears to have been /u:/ (resulting from the raising of ME /ɔ:/ > /u:/) under the effects of the GVS. It has remained /u:/ in RP/GA words such as *food*, *mood*, *proof*, *groom*, *room*, *roof*, *hoof* ... while a shortened /ʊ/ variable has arisen in words like *stood*, *good*, *hood*, *shook*, *took*, *wood* but also in *room*, *roof* and *hoof* (cf. ME /ɔ:/, Chapter 20). Nevertheless, and once again, dialectal pronunciations of many of these words varied and, even today, *took* [tu:k], *shook* [ʃu:k] and *book* [bu:k] (and variants of these) is the normal pronunciation in the North of England rather than /ʊ/. On the other hand, the Dorset poet, William Barnes, pronounced *food*, *mood*, *moot* and *shoot* with [ʊ] while, in West Somerset, *shoot* was pronounced [ʃʌt] (Burton, 2010, 62). These kinds of variants were also common in New England and North America more generally. The SED shows numerous examples with /ʌ/ for this category of word for either GA/RP [u:] or [ʊ].

Dobson (1968, 510) discusses the “survival of [u:]” in a large number of <ood> words into the 17th century. Sir Thomas Smith (1542) records *blood* with both [u:] and [ʊ]. J. Smith (1664) also gives *flood* with short [ʊ] while Tonkis (1612) and Wharton (1654) describe *flood* as having long [u:]. *Good* and *hood* also appear to have [u:] in J. Smith (1664) and other 16th- and 17th-century orthoepists. Many others give unshortened [u:] for a range of <oo> words ending in [t, d, θ] such as *stood*, *foot*, *shoot*, *root*, *soot*, *forsooth*, *tooth* while Wilkins, according to Dobson, gives both [ʊ] and [ʌ] for *foot* (or could it be [ɹ]?). As we shall see below, the SED transcribes this [ɹ] pronunciation of *foot*” in Norfolk as [fɹt], [fɹæt] as well as [fʊt] (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 424).

Shortening is noted (presumably via [u ~ ʊ ~ ɹ]) for *book* and *took* by Hart (1551), in *look* by Newton (1661) and *womb* by Hodges (1649). The following couplet, composed by Franklin in 1757 presents an interesting case of one of our “imperfect rhymes.”

The Press from her fecundous Womb
Brought forth the Arts of Greece and Rome;

Were *womb* and *Rome* pronounced [ɹ ~ ʊ ~ u] or [u:] by Franklin? Webster (1789, 119), from Connecticut, states that it was still pronounced /ɹu:m/ during his day. As we shall see in a moment, Grandgent (1899) shows that shorten versions of <oo> words, for instance, were current in Massachusetts. In this poem, both *womb* and *Rome* could represent shortened [ʊ ~ ɹ], not [ʌ], which he and Lowell

claim was not heard in Massachusetts. Likewise, Franklin's rhymes *doom* ~ *come*, *gloom* ~ *come*, *resume* ~ *doom* implying these were also realized in the area of [ʊ ~ ɹ] when short. Note that Ben Jonson rhymes *Rome* ~ *come* suggesting that he too shared a pronunciation close to this, i.e. [u(:) ~ ʊ ~ ɹ] "Rome" [ɹu(:)m ~ ɹɹm] and "come" [kum ~ kɹm].

An annoyed Webster (1789, 119) comments on this [u:] pronunciation of *Rome*:

Rome is very frequently pronounced *Room*, and that by people of every class. The authors I have consulted give no light upon this word except Perry, who directs to that pronunciation. The practice however is by no means general in America. There are many good speakers who give 'o' its first sound (oo). It seems very absurd to give 'o' its first sound (oo) in *Romish*, *Romans*, and pronounce it 'oo' in *Rome*, the radical word.

In a few <ove> words, which we will examine more closely in the context of New England short o in Chapter 22, Dobson cites evidence for [u:] in *glove*, *approve* and *move* (next to [ʊ]) as well as /u:/ for words with <oo> + <k>: *book*, *took*, *brook*, *cook*, *look*, *nook*, *shook*, *crook*, *hook*, *look*. Hodges (1649) even gives one example of *one* pronounced as [u:], which was common in Dorset until recently (Burton, 2010 61). Hart (1551), however, presents short [ʊ] as alternating alongside [u:] for *approve*, *move*, *book* and *took* and Butler (1633) also has both [ʊ] and [u:] for *strook/struck* (Dobson, 1968). These shortened /ʊ/-like forms may have been the most common variants inherited by the New Englanders. To give an idea of the dialectal complexity, even within a given dialect, the Dorset poet William Barnes also rhymes "one," which he writes as *oon* or *oone*, and are pronounced variably as /u:n/, /wu:n/ and /wʌn/ (Burton, 2010, 61). Again, a simple glance at the SED brings the reality of this kind of variation into focus.

As previously mentioned, traditional northern English speakers still pronounce many of these <oo> words with long /u:/ to this day. I have recorded [u: ~ əɹ] in Deane (near Bolton), Lancashire, in words such as *book*, *look*, *took*, *shook*, etc. and these pronunciations and similar variants are recorded throughout much of the North, including Scotland, but also in areas of the Midlands (including Leicestershire, Warwickshire, Shropshire) as well as scattered areas such as Pembrokeshire, Surrey and Sussex... (Wright, 1905, 342, 516). This conservative feature appears to have been far more widespread throughout the British Isles at one time.

To recapitulate: ME /ɔ:/ in *blood* and *flood* was eventually centralized to [ʌ] in RP/GA but, importantly, not in all varieties of English. As implied above, two hypotheses suggest themselves:

- a. It is normally supposed that ME /ɔ:/ was raised to [u:] by 1500 where,

depending on the word, it was maintained or, in certain environments and dialects, sporadically shortened to [u ~ ʊ]. From there it was again lowered to [ɔ] and, finally, centralized to [ʌ] or a position close to it. I have proposed the possibility of [ʊ] > [ɤ] > [ɣ] > [ʌ], which is more in line with Wells' proposal (Wells, 1988, 198-199). I have suggested that it remained [ɤ ~ ɣ] in a number of varieties in England and in Massachusetts during the 18th century.

- b. An alternative interpretation would be that, in some varieties, ME /ɔ:/ was shortened prior to the GVS (before 1450) following two possible paths:

ME /ɔ:/ > [ɔ] > [ɔ] > [ɔ] followed by slight centring to [ʌ].

ME /ɔ:/ > [ʊ ~ ɤ] > [ɣ] > [ʌ]

With regard to *blood* and *flood*, this second possibility would offer the most practical explanation to account for the rhymes of the New England poets. It is also probable that a combination of these patterns of development merged at various points. Centralization to [ʌ] had to have passed either through [ɔ], as proposed by Lass (1999) or, as I suggest, via [ɣ].

Nevertheless, at this point it is important to consider Krapp's commonsense warning:

The lowering of [ʊ] as in *come* was much earlier than the lowering of [u:], but this latter change was well under way, at least in southern English, by the middle of the seventeenth century. In northern English, by the rounded vowel persisted longer and is still to be heard in the Scotch pronunciation of words like *come*, *some*, etc. as [kʊm], [sʊm], etc.¹⁰ This rounded vowel sound may have continued in America, *but evidence that it did is slight* (my italics). The rimes of poets, if they could be accepted at their face value, would indicate a pronunciation [kʊm], [blʊd], [flʊd], etc. for a number of words, but rimes like *food* : *blood*, Dwight's *Columbiad* pp. 75, 96; *good* : *blood*, pp. 82, 112, 145; *doom* : *come*, p. 203; *floods* : *woods*, p.54, *are so likely to have been merely convenient eye-rhymes that one hesitates to attach much weight to them in the absence of confirmatory evidence.* (my italics) (Krapp, 1925, 164-165)

Of course, Krapp's and Wyld's observations must be taken seriously, but I hope to produce the "confirmatory evidence" of my own that was lacking in their day, showing that these examples are most probably not eye rhymes at all. Again, why would the most problematical of these imperfect rhymes be confined to these categories of back vowels? Considering the huge number of such rhymes

10 In this regard, Krapp is confusing Scots pronunciation with the northern English /ʊ/ realization which I have often heard pronounced as [ɣ] (i.e. nearly as [ɔ]).

in the New England poems and the broad range combinations of short back vowels involved, inevitably spelt in very different ways (hence not eye rhymes), I believe that the data presented here reveals far more than it obscures (cf. Whitehall 1941, Chapter 22). At time Krapp and Wyld were writing, it appears that neither had fully integrated the significance of Jespersen's revelation of the "Great Vowel Shift" (Jespersen, 1905, 1909).

2.1 Grandgent's Interpretations of New England <oo> Words

The analysis presented above corresponds fairly well to Grandgent's observations about the New England pronunciation of certain <oo> words which he says were shortened from /u:/ > /ʊ/ [u ~ ʊ].

Similar, in a way, to short ɒ is the short u in such words as *hoof*, *proof*, *roof*, *room* and *soon*. It goes back to the last century, but was probably regarded until recently as a vulgarity. Dearborn, 1795, gives "huff, ruff, spunfull" in his list of "Improprieties." (Grandgent, 1899, 217)

This is a key passage with regard to what follows. As we shall see in Chapter 22, Grandgent describes New England short o as a slightly advanced and shortened version of [ɔ:], that is, IPA [ɤ]. Wright's notation of it as ù, which he described as acoustically similar to [ɔ] and typical of a broad swath of the English Midlands (and Norfolk) (Wright, 1905, 17), sounds suspiciously similar to Grandgent's account and the historical record as presented here. With the exception of *hoof*, generally pronounced [huf ~ hu:f] in GA and [hu:f] in RP (Roach, 2011, 237), Grandgent's pronunciations of *proof*, *roof*, *room* and *soon* all have [ʊ ~ ɤ] which would certainly strike a modern RP or GA speaker as odd. *Roof* [ɹuf] is sometimes perceived as "rustic" by many GA speakers, but I have heard it in the mouths of highly educated speakers from Ohio, such as the Protestant minister, Dr. Jeremiah.

For reasons that will be clarified in the section on "New England o" (Chapter 22), I do not believe Grandgent is describing [ʊ] here but rather something closer to [ɤ], just a shade lower and barely distinguishable from [ʊ] (or perhaps Wallis' *u obscurum*?). In other words, it is probably the pronunciation identified [ɤ] in the *Strut* words discussed in the section dedicated to ME /u/ in Chapter 20. Recall Mazarin's statement that Wilkins' <y> character was designed to represent [ɤ] in *Strut* words. Although he does not go as far as I do (cf. Chapter 13 for Wilkins' influences on Franklin), I also believe that this <y> represents this same [ɤ] vowel.

but it is worth adding that Wilkins wrote his short new STRUT vowel /ɤ/ as a modified (whence Franklin's STRUT symbol) in honor of its Welsh value /ə/. (Mazarin, 2020, 6)

Mazarin (2020, 11) asserts that Cooper also shared this [ɤ] *Strut* vowel: “Cooper confirms a hyper-rounded FOOT and raised STRUT when he says that both vowels are pronounced alike, except that the lips are pursed or ‘contracted’ for /ʊ/ but spread ‘into an Oblong figure’ for /ɤ/.”

If I have understood him correctly, what Grandgent says about these short <oo> pronunciations being considered “until recently as a vulgarism” is interesting in that it implies that, in 1899, such shortened [ʊ] pronunciations of *proof*, *room* and *soon* had become acceptable. We shall examine some of Franklin’s more peculiar rhymes, such as *moon* ~ *sun* (shared by Shakespeare in his “Venus and Adonis”), which I take to be close to [mʏn] ~ [sʏn], and not [mʌn] ~ [sʌn] or [mu:n] ~ [su:n] (*Poor Richard’s Almanack*, 1733). Given the early date (Franklin was only twenty-seven), this seems to reveal his natural pronunciation of shortened New England <oo> words and conforms with Grandgent’s examples above.

I have previously discussed Mazarin’s assessment of Shakespeare’s *Foot* and *Strut* vowels. Here he asserts that this:

confirms the half-A pattern among the back vowels by rhyming *good* with *bud*, *mood*, and *wood*. All have [u(:)]. Shakespeare’s Sonnet 35 rhymes *moon* and *sun* with *done* /mu:n, sun, dun/. Sonnet 49 has *come*–*sum* /kum, sum/, and Sonnet 116 rhymes *compass* *come* with *doom* /kumpas kum, du:m/. The word *love* fluctuated; Gil transcribes it /luv/ and Smith and Hart as /lu:v/. Either way, Shakespeare’s 154 sonnets rhyme *love* 18 times with reflexes of *move* or *prove*. Later poets retain these conventional rhymes with *move* and *prove* even after *love* becomes /lɔv/. (2020, 18)

Mazarin offers an excellent interpretation of the data here but, as we have seen, the dialectal picture was far more complex at the time and variable for any given word in this set. By rhyming *good* ~ *bud*, he seems to confirm that *good* had a phonetic range close to short [u ~ ʊ ~ ɤ]. We will return to Grandgent’s description of “u” in our discussion of low-mid back vowels because the key to this entire discussion centres on his very precise description of his short “ò” vowel which is almost certainly [ɤ]. In my view, Grandgent is the central candidate in defining New England short o.

As discussed above, it would thus appear that the “*Strut* ~ *Foot* split” occurred at some point prior to 1600 in limited areas of southern England, and that most of the first settlers of Massachusetts pronounced *Strut-Foot* words in the old way, that is, in the vicinity of [u ~ ʊ ~ ɤ ~ ɤ] as stated in the preceding paragraph. As has already been stated, in the North of England the dominant pronunciation remains /ʊ/ to this day with allophones such as [ʊ ~ ɤ] in words such as *blood*, *dove*, *come*, *cut*, etc.

As Grandgent argues, it seems more probable that Dearborn (1795) heard a vowel, depending on the speaker and region, close to [ʊ], o-like [ɤ] or lowered

[ɣ] which, in turn, seems to correspond to Wright's "ù" that he associates with this Midland England corridor where the *Strut-Foot* split did *not* occur. The precise reasons for this will be explained in more detail in the discussion on New England short o in Chapter 22.

We saw in the last chapter that the SED provides support for this interpretation showing, once again, the pronunciation for "foot" in Norfolk is [fʊt], [fɹæt] as well as [fʊt] while [fʌt] and [fʌʔ] are given for Berkshire, [fʌʔ] for Bedford and [fʌt] for Hertfordshire along with [fʊt] (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 814-815). The SED also gives [flɪd] for "flood" for Norfolk alongside [flʌd] (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 424).

This analysis does not seem out of step with Lass' interpretation of the centralization of ME short /u/ and ME /ɔ:/ (1999, 86): "/u/ and /ʌ/ are joined in all environments by reflexes of shortened ME /o:/ and by which *blood* and *flood* were "shortened to ME o," that is to say, a sound he transcribes phonetically as [ɔ]. Keeping the discussion about the interpretations of IPA symbols at the beginning of this chapter, I would think this is plausible if his [ɔ] has the value of short French unrounded [ɔ] of *botte*, a sound close to English [ʌ]. If so, this interpretation would appear to imply the following shifts: ME /ɔ:/ being raised to [u:] by 1500, shortened and lowered to [ʊ] and lowered once again to [ɔ] > [ɔ] > [ɔ] and, from there, being centralized to [ʌ]. My alternate proposal follows the same path but along a slightly centralized route: [ʊ] > [ɣ] > [ɣ] > [ʌ]. These interpretations are not mutually exclusive. As we have seen previously, these represent various stages of change and, depending on the variety, the evolution described here was suspended at different stages.

Again, IPA [ɔ], which I interpret as being articulated as in French *lotte* [lɔt] or *botte* [bɔt], is only a shade to the back of [ʌ], which makes the chance for confusion between the two very real.¹¹ We have already seen Dobson's interpretation of Hart's transcription of *wholly* as [hʷɔləi]. This would be in keeping with Lass' interpretation. As it turns out, *whole* is the key word that Grandgent (1899, 208) gives for his New England short [ɔ] (an older phonetic symbol) which, again, he very precisely defines in a manner corresponding to IPA [ɣ]. To repeat, my point has been that, before reaching [ɔ ~ ʌ] stage, this slightly more conservative and higher [ɣ] appears to have co-existed for a time alongside the lower variants.

The passage from /u:/ > /ʊ/ is confirmed by Dobson (1968, 160). He quotes Butler (1633) who records *good* and *blood* respectively as *gud* [gud] and *blud* [blud] just as Grandgent appears to have done for *hoof*, *proof*, *soon*, *roof*, etc. Recall that Butler was one of the orthoepists Franklin may have consulted for

11 In my English phonetics classes at the University of Western Brittany, Brest, my students often interpreted English <u> RP/GA /ʌ/ as approximating French /ɔ/, hence the frequent confusion between their pronunciation of RP "lock" [lɒk], which they pronounced as *loque* [lɒk], and which English speakers would then reinterpret as "luck" [lʌk]!

his orthographic reform. Orbeck (1927, 46) provides support for this showing *flud* recorded in the Dedham town records (1678) and *blud* (Groton, 1665). I interpret the pronunciation in Massachusetts to be at a position close to [ɤ ~ ʊ].

The Plymouth records also furnish early examples of shortened ME /ɔ:/ pronunciations, with “foot” being spelt *fut* and *futt* (1698). The double <tt> supports a short interpretation of the vowel. The Hempstead records (NY) and the Lancaster records (Mass.) also give *futt* (1666) and *fut* (1775) respectively [fut ~ fɤt ~ fʏt].

Orbeck (1927, 46) also gives *tuck* (Plymouth, 1693) alongside *toke* (Groton, 1693) suggesting the possible variants [tuk ~ tɤk ~ tɔk ~ tʏk]. For more early evidence that such <u> spellings did not represent modern /ʌ/ at this time, see ME short /u/ in Chapter 20. Hall (1942, 34) gives *tuck* for “took” and *bruck* for “broke,” with the “obscure u” pronunciation veering towards [ʊ], but which he transcribed as [tʌk] or [bʌk] in traditional Appalachian pronunciations. Note, however, that Hall (1942, 39) claimed that /ʌ/ was phonetically close to [ʊ], especially before nasals. For me it resembles a long, centralized, nasal [ä:], as in [blä:d] for “blood,” [lä:v] for “love” etc. If so, it would fit in the general scheme described so far, albeit in a quite separate category.

Walker (1791, 35), complains that some people pronounced *soot* as [sat] whereas he claims that it “should be” pronounced [u:] as in *boot*. In GA/RP it is [sut]. Krapp (1925, 150), citing Dearborn (1795) and Ussher (1803), refers to the same list of “improprieties” mentioned by Grandgent above, namely *huff* for “hoof,” *ruff* for “roof,”¹² and *spunful* for “spoonful,” probably with a pronunciation close to [ʊ ~ ɤ].

In his *Reformed Mode of Spelling*, Franklin’s failure to double the <u> or add a circumflex <û> to indicate long [u:] as part of his vocalic system suggests the length of this vowel was not particularly salient to him. The same is true for his treatment of his orthographic <o> which is always presented in his system as being short. The question is whether this was an oversight on his part or whether these vowels were always short in his natural speech. My feeling is that it is linked to the fact that, with regard to GA /u:/ and GA /ou/, the New England phonological system primarily was muddled and he may not have had clear ideas how these vowels should be classified or structured (cf. Chapters 25 and 26 for more discussion)

Very broadly speaking, when viewing contemporary American and English varieties (both standard and non-standard) and cross-dialectally (without taking into account [ɤ ~ ɤ̥] and other variants), we are left with a three-way phonetic range with examples such as:

12 Dobson (1968, 512) claims that “the shortening of ME u: is due almost entirely to words which have final [f] ... *rough, enough, tough, hoof*. If so, one may have to interpret this [f] as being fortis, i.e. [F] or [f:] hence, obligatorily preceded by a short vowel.

<i>hoof</i>	[hu:f ~ huf ~ hʌf]
<i>roof</i>	[ɹu:f ~ ɹuf ~ ɹʌf]
<i>room</i>	[ɹu:m ~ ɹʊm ~ ɹʌm]
<i>soot</i>	[su:t ~ sut ~ sʌt]
<i>shook</i>	[*ʃu:k ~ ʃʊk ~ ʃʌk]
<i>took</i>	[*tu:k ~ tʊk ~ tʌk]
<i>foot</i>	[*fu:t ~ fut ~ fʌt]...

* North Midlands, North of England, varieties of Hiberno-English...

To repeat, in all of these examples, the [ʌ] variants were likely to have been preceded historically by [ɹ] during the last stage of the downward shift. Furthermore, variants of these were once competing variants of the 17th-century American feature pool. When seen from this perspective, tracing the phonemic barriers becomes a rather sticky issue if one takes multiple dialectal systems into account. Confirmation of this is found in Krapp (1925, 148-149), who cites examples from Webster such as “shoot” [ʃʊt] and “root” [ɹʊt]. He asserts that shortening of [u:] was a tendency in New England giving words such *broom* [bɹʊm], *room* [ɹʊm], *spoon* [spʊn], etc. The examples he cites of should be kept in mind for the discussion in Chapter 22: *aloof*, *boot*, *coop*, *Cooper*, *food*, *groom*, *hoof*, *hoop*, *Hooper*, *nook*, *proof*, *rood*, *roof*, *rook*, *rooster*, *root*, *soon*, *soot*, *spook*, *woof* all realized as [ʊ] according to Krapp (1925, 149) and possibly to [ɹ]. We have seen above that Franklin’s rhyme of *moon* ~ *sun* was very likely [ɹ], that is, a variable of [ʊ] is a real possibility (as is still the case in Norfolk (cf. Orton & Tilling, 1970, 424).

The centralized examples in this relatively small class of words appear to have followed the same path as indicated above for *flood* and *blood*, namely, post-GVS: [u:] > [u] > [ʊ] > [ɹ] > [ɹ] > [ʌ] or, the change occurred pre-GVS: [ɔ:] > [ɔ] > [ɹ] > [ɹ] > [ʌ]. Very important to keep in mind, in terms of chronology, all of these pronunciations were often used and in competition during overlapping periods.

This analysis would seem to be justified by the patterns of <oo> rhymes encountered in Dwight, Barlow, Franklin’s poems and those of other American poets, which fall into several main categories. I have classified them according to their modern GA pronunciations. These rhyme types will be discussed more fully in the discussion of New England short o. The following are all examples I have taken from Franklin’s *Poor Richard’s Almanack*. Here we must nevertheless keep Krapp’s caveat in mind regarding the possibility of “eye rhymes.”

- a. GA /u:/ ~ /ʊ/: corresponding to Franklin’s [ɹ]?

*I see no great Skill, quo’ Richard, by the Rood;
But I think Bleeding’s like to do most good.* (1737)

To make the cleanly Kitchen send up *Food*,
Not costly vain, but plentifully *Good*. (1748)

To clothe the Bare, and give the Empty *Food*;
As bright as Guardian Angels, and as *good*. (1748)

Let what you say the converse *suit*,
Not say things merely 'cause they're *good*. (1748)

The distribution of these rhymes suggests that either “good” was realized as [gu:d], somewhat unlikely, or [gud] or possibly [gud ~ gʁd] in which case *rood*, *food* and *suit* would all be pronounced as [ʊ ~ ʁ]. *Good* realized as [gud] and [gu:d] is negated by the following examples:

b. GA ʌ ~ ʊ corresponding to Franklin's [ʁ]?

Our other Virtues dwell but in the *Blood*,
That in the Soul, and gives the Name of *Good*. (1756)

A little well-gotten will do us more *good*,
Than lordships and scepters by Rapine and *Blood*. (1743)

Sustain'd by Reason still, unmov'd he *stood*,
And steady bore against th' opposing *Flood*. (1740)

The Hills, the Dales, and the delightful *Woods*,
The flowry Plains, and Silver-streaming *Floods*, (1742)

Conclusion: the evidence leans strongly in favour of [ʁ ~ ʊ]. This series of examples reinforces the hypothesis that all four words were pronounced in the area of [ʁ ~ ʊ].

Pain'd for its Choice, would still its Choice *resume*,
Which (by sure Want) but more augments the *Doom*,
Can tell when round, to each fix'd Place, shall *come*,
Faint Dawn, Meridian Light, or Midnight *Gloom*. (1756)

Mirth, that no repenting *Gloom*
Treasures for our Years to *come*. (1750)

The cross-rhyme of *resume* ~ *come* and *doom* ~ *gloom* can be interpreted in two ways: *resume* ~ *come* [ʊ ~ ʁ] and *gloom* ~ *doom* [u:] or [ʊ ~ ʁ]. But his rhyme of *gloom* ~ *come* and *resume* ~ *doom* below, once again lean heavily in favour of [ʊ ~ ʁ].

We are also confronted with the question of vocalic length. As we shall see below, Orbeck (1927, 45) gives examples of “comes” spelt *cums* [kʁmz] (Groton, 1702) and *cumpas* [kʁmpæs] (Dedham, 1636). If these minimal pairs cited are not approximate rhymes, this can only mean *resume*, *doom*, *gloom* have a shortened [ʊ ~ ʁ] vowel.

Lowell also gives spellings of “come” as *cum* in his *Biglow Papers* (1848) showing continuity between 17th and mid-19th century pronunciation in the Boston area. At this late date, the exact quality of Lowell’s *cum* vowel (alongside *gut* for “got,” *forgut* for “forgot”) is somewhat uncertain but, based on Grandgent’s testimony (citing Lowell, born in 1819), <ut> was not yet /ʌ/ in Massachusetts and hence, it must have had a quality close to [ɤ ~ ʊ].

c. GA [u: ~ ʊ] corresponding to Franklin’s [ɤ]?

If *doom* and *gloom* are short in the preceding stanzas, as it would appear, should *bloom*, *doom*, *food* and *brood* be interpreted in the following couplets as having short [ʊ ~ ɤ] as well? Or is Franklin allowing himself some poetic liberty? I have no definitive answer to this question.

The baffled Prince, in Honour’s flatt’ring *Bloom*,
Of hasty Greatness, finds the fatal *Doom*; (1750)

Pain’d for its Choice, would still its Choice *resume*,
Which (by sure Want) but more augments the *Doom*, (1756)

Blood stuff’d in Guts is British Christian’s *Food*,
And France robs Marshes of the croaking *Brood*; (1751)

I have already discussed one of the most bizarre of Franklin’s rhymes from a modern standpoint, namely, *sun* ~ *moon*. I have interpreted the pronunciation of *sun* ~ *moon* as being yet another example of the *Strut* ~ *foot non-split* (with a shortened [u:] vowel in *moon* > [ʊ ~ ɤ]). Recall that this same rhyme is given by Shakespeare, for which Mazarin (see above) interprets as “/mu:n/ ~ /sun/,” not impossible given the period.

Observe the daily circle of the *sun*,
And the short year of each revolving *moon*: (1733)

Again, *sun* is likely pronounced [ɤ] and *moon* is another shortened <oo> of the kind indicated by Grandgent (1899, 217) for Massachusetts: *hoof*, *proof*, *hoof*, *roof*, *soon*..., presumably with [ɤ ~ ʊ].

To conclude this long section, we have thus seen that the earliest pronunciation of these words was originally ME [ɔ:], followed by raising to [u:] by 1500 and shortening to [ʊ] with a following quality adjustment to [ɤ] during the 16th and 17th centuries, followed by a steady lowering and tendency for centralization which involved the following steps: [ʊ] > [ɤ] > [ɤ] > [ʌ].

The other possibility was an older quantity reduction of ME /ɔ:/ > [ɔ] > [ɤ] > [ɤ] > [ʌ]. The advantage of this model is that it follows a direct course. It is certain that each regional dialect of England and each koine in North America had its own phonological system that ran in parallel with what has been described, or not. The goal is thus to identify the common denominator(s) in the rhymes.

3. ME o /ɔ:/ > [u:]

Following Zachrisson, Dobson (1968: 671) argues that what is generally transcribed as low-mid ME /ɔ:/, was pronounced at an intermediate point between [ɒ:] and close [ɔ:] concluding that this analysis is “pretty close to the mark.” If taken literally, I would interpret this intermediate vowel to be somewhere in the neighbourhood of [ɔ:]. Dobson continues saying that “in the course of the 17th century it was narrowed to [ɔ:], at least in the pronunciation of some speakers.” However, he qualifies this by specifying that [ɒ:] and [ɔ:] variants co-existed and he repeats that the sound was slightly higher than “*what modern phoneticians call ‘cardinal open [ɔ:]’*” (my italics) (ibid., 672). This may be what we shall see in Chapter 22 when we attempt to explain *Lot*, *Goat*, *Goose* and *Foot* rhymes. Again, this brings us closer to [ɔ:], that is, the allophonic “bridge” that I proposed initially between /ɔ:/ and /ɔ:/ and which allowed fluctuation between high-mid ME /ɔ:/ and low-mid ME /ɔ:/ in the first place (and presumably all shades in-between). This could include our slightly centralized [ɤ: and ɤ:] variables.

I would summarize Dobson’s position as follows: once ME short o (low-mid /ɔ: ~ ɔ:/), had been raised to the area of [ɔ: ~ u:] in words such as *move*, *prove*, *who*, *do*, *to*, etc. during the 17th century, it appears this vowel came to be confused with ME /ɔ:/, i.e. *Goose* words, resulting in the merging of a large number of words. Consequently, as stated in the introduction to mid back vowels, those words which were originally pronounced with ME [ɒ(:) ~ ɔ(:)] obligatorily had to pass through [ɔ:] and [ɔ:] stages on their way up to /u:/. In some varieties, it is likely that the pronunciations of certain vowels was stuck in-between. The shortening of [u:] > [ʊ] and the subsequent lowering of [ʊ] > [ɤ] followed a path similar to the one observed for *Strut* and *Foot* words. This course led these key words via a slightly centralized route, first to [ɤ ~ ɤ] and then eventually to centralized [ʌ] now current in RP/GA. If so, this would provide a practical explanation for many of the difficult rhymes encountered in the New England poems (as well as in contemporary England – Alexander Pope, for instance).

As always, the dialects evolved in different directions, retaining certain conservative traits on the one hand, while, on the other, introducing innovative features. This kind of variation is evident in the analyses of the orthoepists themselves. What seems to explain the shift under study is the vacillation by which mid back [ɔ:] served as a bridge permitting the rise of [ɒ: ~ ɔ:] > [ɔ:] > [ɔ:] > [u:] but also their subsequent lowering. Did it follow a backed vocalic route or a marginally advanced pathway?

As was just said, Dobson (1968, 672) argued that during all this time, conservative [ɔ: ~ ɔ:] and innovative [ɔ: ~ u:] pronunciations “co-existed” but “were never distinct phonemes; they were only variants (i.e. partly ‘diaphonic,’ partly contextual) of long o.” This observation is crucial to our analysis and

his position on this point converges with my overall argument, which is that each non-standard variety of English had (and has) its own phonemic system and a phoneme in one variety of English does not necessarily correspond to a phoneme in another variety, nor do its allophones (cf. again, recall Shorrocks' remarks on the difficulty of determining phonemic boundaries in his study of Bolton English (Shorrocks, 1998). And, in his case, he was restricted to analyzing the English of one city, not of an entire nation.

Among the many instances of the raising of ME [ɔ:] to high-mid back [ɔ: ~ u:] cited by Dobson for the 16th century are *comb* [ku:m] (1968, 486, 676) and *womb* as [wu:m] (beside [wam] and [wɔ:m] (ibid., 486, 677). Here again, [ɹ] is missing in this debate. For this reason, I would interpret Franklin's *womb* to be [wɹm] rather than [wam] while Trudgill (2016) records [kum] for *comb* in modern-day Norfolk (GA [koum]). Both are evidently shortened variants of [u: ~ ɔ:] and former ME /ɔ/.

Dobson interprets *throne*, another key word in the New England poems, as [tru:n] (ibid., 676) ([trɔ:n] in OF) which I propose the New Englanders pronounced [θɹn]. Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal, the Welsh poet and Oxford student who composed "Hymn to the Virgin" around 1480 and to whom we referred in Chapter 16, wrote about a *God mat trwn* for "God-made throne." *Smoke* is given as [smu:k] (ibid.). Bullokar gives *stroke* as both [stru:k] and [strɔ:k] (ibid.). *Who* (OE hwā) is already recorded as [hu:] by Bullokar and Gil (ibid., 677) and has remained in this position ever since. The confusion has been considerable in which both ME /ɔ:/ and ME /ɔ:/ fall together and ascend to /u:/ in a way reminiscent of the mid front vowels, ME /ɛ:/ and ME /e/ > /i:/.

It is obviously not the objective of this book to trace the history of every sound change in this category, but many of the vowels of words which were raised to [u:] have remained in that position until this day. Our objective is to see how these developments were realized in Franklin's idiolect and, secondly, how he presented them in his orthographic reform.

Nevertheless, the shortened versions of these EME long /u:/ pronunciations appear to be the source of many of the [ɹ]-type pronunciations that are associated with not only New England short u but also examples of New England short o.

3.1 Coexistence of Dialectal Variables: Some Examples with "do"

The shift to [u:] must have occurred quite early. Dobson (1968, 452-453) cites evidence from Hart (1551) who gives stressed *do* [du:] only 11 times against 64 times for unstressed *do* [dʊ]. This clearly implies that the base form of unstressed *do* [dʊ] was [du:]. One can certainly imagine [də] as being a natural reduced variant as it still is in non-standard varieties of the southwestern English

dialects (cf. Ihalainen, 1991, for Somerset) but also in American Gullah as well as West African and Jamaican Creoles (cf. German, 2006).¹³ These pronunciations, alongside the use of [də] to express the habitual aspect, often persisted in southwestern dialects of England and, by extension, in AAVE (cf. Gachelin, 1981; Ihalainen, 1991; German, 1996, 2006).

Proof of the co-existence of variant forms is seen in Wallis (1653), for instance, who preferred [dɔ:] (or [dɔ:ɪ]?) to [du:], showing that an [ɔ:] variant probably did persist in certain varieties alongside [u:] (Dobson, 1968, 452-453). Again, based on my experience with Breton (i.e. Celtic) dialects, I am not convinced Dobson meant a truly high-mid [dɔ:] pronunciation here given that natural speakers would have had serious difficulty distinguishing the two (i.e. [du: ~ dɔ:]). Nevertheless, this is not to say that some speakers, like Wallis, may not have unconsciously retained [dɔ:] alongside [du:] in free variation and, if so, the difference would have largely passed unnoticed to his contemporaries.

Undoubtedly, as is usually the case, sociolinguistic factors weighed in heavily by determining the final triumph of certain pronunciations over others in the standard language. But even here, orthoepists' opinions have varied significantly. This discussion will be revisited in Chapter 26, when we consider Franklin's apparent preference for the older realization of "to" as [tɔ] versus Polly Stevenson's Kensington, London, [tu(:)].

Dost was pronounced [du:st] when stressed and [dʌst], [dɔst] or even [dʏst] when unstressed, but Hart (1551/1569) and Gil (1619) also appear to record a shortened centralized pronunciation of [dʌst] (Dobson, 1968), or was it [dʏst] like the realization of "dust" in contemporary Norfolk? Finally, Cheke and Hart also record the stressed form of *done* as [du:n] and transcribe it as *doon*, a further indication that this innovation was an early one. Yet, Gil (1619) says [du:n] is dialectal and typical of Lincolnshire and the North more generally and, Levins, a Yorkshireman, also has [u:] here. As would be expected, the unstressed form was [dʌn] which, as we have already seen, was shortened and later centralized to [ʌ] in the southern varieties of England for a large number of words originating from ME /u/, ME /ɔ:/ and ME /ʊ/. Orbeck (1927, 46) offers several spellings of "done" for Massachusetts ranging from *don* [dɔn ~ dɔn?] (Groton, 1682), *dun* [dʌn ~ dʌn] (Watertown, 1673), *doon* [du(:)n ~ dʌn] (Groton, 1682), *doone* [du(:)n ~ dʌn] (Watertown, 1651). On occasion, Orbeck considers this <oo> could be high [u:] or high-mid [ɔ:], which is only higher lower than [ʏ]. We saw in

13 It is probable that this feature (periphrastic "Do" but also invariable "Be") and its function of expressing the habitual aspect, which was still a characteristic of the southern basilectal Englishes until recently, may have exercised a powerful influence on the development of the aspectual system of West African creoles during the first contacts between British seafarers (often from southern England) and West African merchants involved in the slave trade during first decades of the 16th century.

Lodwick's Lord's Prayer that *done* is transcribed by Mazarin (2020, 11) as [dʁn]. See Chaucer's spellings below from his *Canterbury Tales* (1387-1400).

A reflex of this ME /ɒ/ vowel was brought to New England and pronounced in the vicinity of [ɾ ~ ʌ]. Lowell (1848), however, writes *doos* for "does," presumably still pronounced as [du:z] in the local Massachusetts vernacular rather than [dʁz], but also *Rooshen* for "Russian" ['ru:ʃən]. Note that Orbeck (1927, 46) also gives *dose* [dɔ(:)s] for "does" (Groton, 1694).

To conclude this section, the geographical source of this raising from EME [ɒ:] (< ME [ɔ:]>) to [u:] appears to be the East of England, although Dobson mentions it occurred in the North too. It appears that many words of this category were shortened to a position approximating [ʊ ~ ɿ]. These competing pronunciations were part of the New England feature pool during the crucial 17th-century settlement period and codified systemically during the 18th century (cf. New England short o below).

As we shall see, however, these details provide a major argument demonstrating Franklin's intention to adopt London pronunciation for his RMS as opposed to his own native New England English. As we shall see in Chapter 26, Franklin actually designed a character **ʏ** (influenced by Wilkins, cf. Chapter 13) to specifically represent the precursor of IPA /ʌ/, that is, [ɾ ~ ɿ] which he systematically uses to transcribe *done*, *come*, *one*, etc. Again, Lodwick's "thy kingdom come, thy will be done" is transcribed as [ðei kiŋdʁm kʁm] [ðei wil be dʁn]...

4. ME /ɔ/ > [ɔ(:)] > [ɒ(:)] > [ɑ(:)]

The history of short ME /ɔ/ (ME short o) differs from that of its long counterpart, ME /ɔ:/. Dobson informs us that it was originally "a relatively high cardinal open [ɔ]," which was "lengthened in open syllables" and which he "identified with OF [ɔ], itself a relatively high vowel." From there it was lowered to "unrounded" [ɒ] which, Dobson adds, "is more closely akin to French back [ɑ] than to French open [ɔ]" (Dobson, 1968, 536). I have explained elsewhere that my interpretation of French [ɔ] is only barely rounded (as in *botte*, *lotte*, *donner*) and is fairly close to [ʌ]. Dobson's reference to [ɑ] sounds very much like the American realization of this vowel described by Grandgent in 1899. Dobson's description of these low back [ɒ] and [ɑ] vowels will be brought up again when we present Grandgent's observations about the early New England English pronunciation of <o> and <au> which he associates with French â of *pâte*, namely [ɑ(:)]. See also a similar description by Walker (1791, xv).

Dobson (1968, 579) records *skalerz* ['skaləɪz ~ 'ska:ləɪz] (my interpretation) "scholars" as being attributed by Gil to the *mopsae* speakers (presumably of London) of the "eastern dialects" of England. He also gives *Gad*, *strap* and *plat*

for *God*, *strop* and *plot*, adding “it seems unlikely that an educated man would ever have used this pronunciation in careful speech (whatever he may have said in his unguarded moments).” Here, however, I sense that Dobson may have been influenced by the sociolinguistic climate at Oxford University during the mid-20th century (cf. Queen Elizabeth I’s pronunciation of “stop” in the next paragraph). As we have seen, the eastern dialects were precisely among the most dominant of the input varieties in 17th-century Massachusetts and we can be quite certain that such pronunciations figured in the feature pool. If Gil (1619) identifies this [a] pronunciation as “careless” speech associated with the *mopsae*, Lass (1999, 87) quoting St Editha (1420), gives *starme* for “storm” and *crass* for “cross” and cites Queen Elizabeth as writing *stap* for “stop.” He does not interpret the precise value of the <a> so we do not how fronted or backed, or high or low this vowel may have been. It certainly varied according to the speaker and their status and region (cf. Leith’s spelling of *crass* as “cross” for Somerset, 1895, below!).

Just as for long ME /ɔ:/, Görlach and Lass propose a slightly fronted [ɔ] vowel for ME short /ɔ/ rather than Dobson’s [ɒ]. Görlach gives the following account of the aforementioned merger between ME short o /ɔ/ and ME short a /a/ which could explain Grandgent’s dual New England [a ~ ɑ] pronunciation of *cot*:

Both of the short back vowels became more open in Early Modern English. The mid-low /ɔ/ as in *dog*, *hot*, and *rob* lowered further to /ɒ/, which was well established by 1670. Occasionally, it merged with the more front /a ~ æ/ in *fashionable realizations* (my italics) of the second half of the 17th century (cf. contemporary spellings like *plat* “plot” and *Gad* “God”). In most Northern American dialects, /ɒ/ pursued a different path: it lengthened and unrounded to /ɑ:/ in the late 17th or early 18th century. (Görlach, 2012, 598)

If Görlach is correct, this would mean that the shift from /ɒ/ > /ɑ:/ would be a uniquely American development. Yet, if his observation that ME short o was pronounced as a front /a ~ æ/ vowel in “fashionable realizations” during the second half of the 17th century with contemporary spellings like *plat* “plot” and *Gad* “God,” this suggests to me that there existed a panoply of variant forms: [ɒ(:)], [ɑ(:)], [a(:)] and, for some words, even [æ(:)]. (See below for the pronunciation of *yon* and *yonder*.)

It is thus difficult to believe that this [ɑ:] realization was not already present in England and that it would have developed in America at some point during the late 17th or 18th century, especially considering that the settlers had arrived so recently. Furthermore, Wells (1989, 347) points out that the unrounding of [ɒ] to [ɑ] is “the popular stereotype of a west-country accent”...“being qualitatively [ɑ], much as in the Irish Republic or the United States” (my italics). For instance, the SED records [dɑ:g] as the pronunciation of “dog” for Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Monmouthshire and Gloucestershire while [dɔ:g] is given for

Shropshire and Herefordshire, showing that the existence of long vowels and the low quality of the [ɑ:] vowel in these environments is a shared English and American characteristic (i.e. GA [dɑ:g] or [lɑ:t] for *Lot*) (Orton & Barry, 1969, 323).

It is hard to believe that these West Country examples do not have a long history especially given the fact that the range stretched from [ɑ:] (perhaps even [æ] to [ɒ(:)]). Wells (1989, 339-340) also notes that, in Norfolk,

though apparently not in the rest of East Anglia, the *Lot* vowel has an unrounded variant, ranging phonetically from [ɑ] to [a-]. This may or may not involve a variable phonetic merging with *Start* (so that *box=barks* [ba-ks]).

This is precisely what one hears in the American Northeast around the Great Lakes. However, in contemporary Massachusetts *box* and *barks* are pronounced [bɑ:ks] and [ba:ks] respectively. This shows us two things: as expected, Massachusetts shared similar pronunciations with the Norfolk variety and, as stated above, the [ɑ] quality of *Lot* words is not a specifically American phenomenon.

Indeed, Dobson (1968, 576) asserts that the confusion between ME short a and ME short o occurred as early as the 14th century: *Talington* for Tolington (1336, Middlesex), *Balnhurst* for Bolnhurst (1202) and *Clapham* for Clopham (1247, Bedfordshire)... (ibid., 580, note 3). This suggests to me that the oscillation between these two sounds is deeply anchored in the language. The Lunenburg records (1719-1764, Mass.) have *Spafford* for “Spoffard,” *Ardeway* for “Ordway” and the Huntington records (NY) have *marrow* ['maɪo ~ 'mæɪo?] for “morrow” (1660) (Krapp, 1925, 95-96). As I have already pointed out, the town of Staunton, Virginia, is still pronounced ['stæntən ~ 'stæn?n] by the local population (German, personal notes).

Orbeck (1927, 19) gives a number of examples of this kind showing that the [ɑ:] ([æ:]?) pronunciations indicated by Görlach above were once shared by Massachusetts speakers as well: *Rabrt* ['ɹɑ:bəɪt] for “Robert” (Dedham, 1637), *band* [ba:nd] “bond” (Dedham, 1666), *gatt* [gat] for “got” (Groton, 1694), *an* [a(:)n] for “on” (Plymouth, 1702), *Platt* [plat] for “plot” (Dedham, 1649) and, repeatedly, *platts* for “plots” (Groton, 1677). We shall see below that this pronunciation contrasts sharply with another subcategory of 17th-century *Lot* word which offer unexpectedly high to high-mid back realizations.

Fronted [a(:)] pronunciations of ME short o [ɔ] appear to have been quite stable in various regions of England since the Middle English period. As just noted above, in Alicia Leith’s 1895 novel, <a> spellings are the rule: “*crass Channel* [kɹas 'tʃanəl] for “(a)cross (the) Channel” (p. 73) or in the sentence “He turned a zickly kind o’ colour an’ *crassed* (i.e. “crossed” [kɹast]) himself on his *burst* [bəɪst] (breast)” (Leith, 1898, 105).

Citing Jennings and Elsworthy respectively, Burton (2020, 58-59) presents evidence for Dorset showing the dominant pronunciation in words such as *drop*, *stop*, *top* and *crop*, *drop*, *strop*, *notch* as having “forward /a/” (or perhaps /a/?). Nevertheless, Burton concludes that “On balance, then it looks as if Barnes’ own preference was for /ɒ/ in words with short o, but its unrounding in certain words gave him the flexibility to rhyme it with either /a/ or /ɒ/,” for example *drop*, rhymed with *mop*, which he takes to have /ɒ/ and, several lines later, *drap* rhyming with *clap*, [drap] ~ [klap]. As I have argued previously, this kind of code-switching must have been more common among poets than we might imagine today given our highly unified systems of pronunciation.

Barnes also rhymed *beyond* [brʲand] ~ *hand* [hand] and he consistently spelt “yonder” as *yander* [ʲandəɪ]. *John*, which he occasionally spells *Jahn* [dʒa:n] is also made to rhyme with *stan* “stand” (Burton, 2010, 59). Note the loss of final [d] in the [-nd] cluster, a phenomenon which some creolists claim derives from an African influence (for more on this, cf. Consonants, Chapter 23). Not surprisingly, Barnes’ contemporary, James Lowell (1848), also indicates *drop* and *crop* for Massachusetts as being pronounced [dɹap] and [kɹap] (see also Grandgent, 1899).

Compare Barnes’ *beyond* ~ *hand* with the Connecticut poet, Trumbull, who rhymed *beyond* ~ *end*. This last rhyme suggests the aforementioned raised [ɛ(:)] suggesting [biʲɛ(:)nd] ~ [ɛ(:)nd] (Trumbull, quoted in Krapp, 1925, 146). Furthermore, we have seen in Chapter 7 that *end* was sometimes spelt *eend* (Lowell, 1848) suggesting high front [ɪnd] and [i:nd] variants (and possibly [i-mnd] with breaking).

With regard to southwestern English pronunciations of “yonder” as [ʲandəɪ], Hall (1942, 28-29) gives two interesting examples of a slightly higher pronunciation of *yon* and *lopping* for the Smokies, which are certainly relics of the older [æ(:)] pronunciation referred to by Görlach above: “I seed a fish yon long and yon round” which he transcribes as [a 'sɪd ə 'fɪʃ 'jæn lɔŋ n 'jæn ɹæund]. Note also his transcription of “fish” with close tense [i], which I have heard with long tense [i:] (cf. Chapter 16, ME short /i/). His second example is taken from an old hunter who once told him “We heared a bear a-loppin limbs” (i.e. off of a tree) [wi 'hɪəd ə 'bæə ə'læpən 'lɪmz] (i.e. “lopping off”). These pronunciations are still common among “mountain people” of all ages to this very day.

A striking parallel with this Appalachian pronunciation of “lop” is provided by the SED records an informant from Worcestershire who also pronounced it as [læp] in the phrase “lopped it down” as [læpt ɪt dəʊn] (also [læpɪn] Gloucester, Orton & Barry, 1970, 453) showing the kinship here between southern American Midland and English West Midland pronunciations here

is undeniable.¹⁴ There is no way of proving whether Franklin shared such pronunciations as a boy in Boston.

There is also clear early evidence showing that ME /o/ was raised even further from [æ] to [ɛ] in certain words. Dobson (1968, 566) shows that, at least in some dialects, ME o > ME e with *yon* and *yonder* being rendered *ien* [jɛn] and *iender* [jɛndəɪ]. He gives Cheke (circa 1540) as pronouncing “yon” as *ien* [jɛn].

In a recent discussion with a sixty-three-year-old woman from Sand Gap, Kentucky (May 2022), she explained that the common pronunciation for “yonder” is still [jændəɪ] among her older family members. I have heard this in other areas of Appalachia, used by both young and old. This is yet another example of dialectal continuity between 17th-century English varieties and contemporary non-standard American paritary dialects. Another example showing the dialectal continuity between 17th-century English varieties and non-standard American paritary dialects.

Sir Isaac Newton preferred *yelk* to “yolk” (OE *geolca*) as did Gil (1619) and Cooper (1685) (Dobson, 1968, 566). The opinions among orthoepists contrasted sharply. *Yelk*, for instance, was condemned by Coote (1596) as representative of “the barbarous speech of your country people” (ibid.). This shows how certain “vulgar” pronunciations were often retained by later generations of prestigious speakers including Webster (1789, 123) who writes that *yelk* was still the dominant realization in New England at the end of the 18th century!

The word *yelk* is sometimes written *yolk* and pronounced *yoke*. But *yelk* is the most correct orthography, from the Saxon *gealkwe* [spelled *geoleca*, *geolca*, from *geolu* yellow, in Ettmuller, p. 418]; and in this country it is the general pronunciation.

The SED records [jelk] for “yolk” for Norfolk (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 485).

To summarize, ME /ɔ/ has a complex history involving lowering [ɔ ~ ɒ] > [ɑ] > [ɑ:], followed fronting [ɑ(:)] and raising [æ:] > [ɛ(:)]. This explains the treatment of a word like “yon” and “yonder” which have variants today in England and America of RP [ɒ], GA [ɑ:], southern American Midland [æ:], hearkening back to John Cheke’s *ien* [jɛn] “yon” (1540).

14 Hall adds that his informants were “only the very old,” that is, people who would have been born between 1850 and 1860. It was their grandparents who travelled southward from the original settlements in Delaware and Pennsylvania, a region where the majority of the founder generation had come from the (North-)West Midlands. Others would have come directly from Virginia. The latter were largely of southwestern English origin and Scottish. African American slaves were relatively few in number in this poor mountainous region where plantations were not financially viable. Cf. Althea Webb, “African Americans in Appalachia,” *Oxford African American Studies Centre*, <https://oxfordaasc.com/page/featured-essay-african-americans-in-appalachia>

5. *Lot* and *Taught* Words

This section covers the develop of *Lot* and *Taught* words. The history of these two lexical sets is closely bound, resulting in the frequent blurring of pronunciations of the two categories. By dealing with *Taught* words here, however, we are stepping ahead of ourselves since this key word will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 23. We had a first glance at *Taught* words in our investigation of ME /a/ (cf. Sequence 3) in Chapter 19. Here we saw that ME au and ou + /x/ > [ɑɔ] > [ɒɔ] followed by lowering through vowel affection and vocalic assimilation, the result being a monophthong [ɑ: ~ ɒ:]. At a later period this was raised to rounded [ɔ:] in eastern England and final adopted in RP in the early 20th century.

The Huntington records (NY) have *dafter* ['dæftə(ɪ) ~'daftə(ɪ)] for “daughter” (1657) and the Southold records (Mass.) also have *dafters* ['dæftə.ɪz ~'daftə(ɪ)z]¹⁵ (Krapp, 1925, 147). Hall (1942, 33) transcribes “daughter” as ['dæɹə] commenting that it was typical of “old-fashioned Smokies speech.” Burton points out that Gachelin (1981) records Barnes’ spelling of *dafter* twice but he does not accept that the /f/ was still pronounced in Barnes’ day (Burton, 2010, 91). Given the surprising archaisms encountered in Barnes’ poetry, Burton’s opinion here may be a bit hasty. Jean-Marc Gachelin was a very meticulous and brilliant linguist whose understanding of the diachronic past of English dialects was profound, having studied the Dorset dialect on location himself. In 1983/84, I recorded Mrs. Thelma Penn, an elderly lady and native of Alexandria, Virginia (considered part of Tidewater), who still pronounced “drought” as [d.ɹəuft]. Linguistic fossils such as *drouft* and *dafters* were scattered throughout the English-speaking world until recently but often went unheeded.

Around the Great Lakes today, *Lot*, *Taught* and *Talk* words, are often pronounced as a rather striking long low front vowel approaching [a:]: *Tom* [ta:m], *walk* [wa:k], *Taught* [ta:t] etc. Krapp (1925, 97), however, vigorously opposes the hypothesis that this American [a] pronunciation results from Irish influence and argues, correctly in my view (and as implied by Wells’ evidence), that both the American and Irish pronunciation of ME o share a common linguistic inheritance in that they both have the same 17th-century southern English origins. We have noted that [a:] is particularly common in the West Country even today. The discussion on the history of *Lot* words at the beginning of this section leans in favour of such a conclusion and shows that the three key words fell together at some point.

Regarding the pronunciation of “soft,” an interesting parallel exists between Lancashire and Appalachia with Shorrocks (1998) and Hall (1942, 33) both recording [sæ:ft] and [sæəft] respectively. Recall Alicia Leith’s Somerset spelling

15 Nevertheless, I could not find this example of *dafters* cited by Krapp in the Southold records.

of “soft-hearted” as *zaft-hearted* (Leith 1895). We shall also consider this again under a different light (cf. Diphthongs, Chapter 22). As we saw in Chapter 19, in colonial times *sauce*, *saucy*, *haunt*, *taunt*... were pronounced [æ(:)]. *Sauce* and *saucy* and survives to this day with this pronunciation in the modern American vernacular as *sass* (vb. *to sass* s.o. “to respond in a rude manner or speak disrespectfully”) or *sassy* (“spirited” or “feisty,” generally when speaking of a woman of character) (cf. Chapter 19). Most Americans today would not imagine an association between “sassy” and “saucy.” Note also that Walker (1791) identifies variant pronunciations of *wrath* as [ɹæ(:)θ] and [ɹʌθ] as “English” (< ME *a*) while today the first is distinctly GA and the second markedly RP.

Historically, various subcategories of ME /ɔ/, ME /a/, ME /au/ and /ɔu/ fell together and were pronounced as fronted and raised pronunciations in certain words. These realizations were once shared by the New Englanders and, more broadly, by the founder generations across early colonial America. The presence of these forms is in keeping with my hypothesis that the major phonological, but also grammatical, colonial input varieties were from the Southeast and Southwest and the Midlands of England (cf. Chapter 2) particularly during the critical 17th-century settlement period.

It is the varieties of these regions that seem to have contributed the most to the emerging colonial American koines (including Appalachian English) of the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Once again, the fact is that, time and time again, one observes multiple stages of frozen linguistic developments co-existing cross-dialectally during different time periods. This relativizes the rule that has constrained linguists to avoid mixing diachronic and synchronic approaches in the study of language, particularly when one observes ongoing change within the same speech community (cf. de Saussure, 1916, 117, 119).

5.1 Grandgent’s Evidence

The history of ME /ɔ/ is complex to say the least. To delve more deeply into the New England data, I turned to three principal sources. The first is Grandgent (1899) who, as we know, was born and raised in Massachusetts (b. 1862) and is one of the few who actually heard the vernacular pronunciations firsthand. The second source is the information obtained from the analyses of the New England poems composed by Franklin, Barlow and Dwight. Finally, the third source, and the most pertinent for understanding the New Englanders’ rhyme schemes, is based on the 17th-century town records, particularly the research done by Orbeck (1927) who presents some extraordinary evidence which contributes to a far better understanding of some of the more peculiar rhymes than would have been otherwise possible. In terms of chronology, we begin with Grandgent’s 19th-century descriptions and move backwards to the 18th-century

poems and, finally, the 17th-century Massachusetts town records.

The fact that Grandgent was a Massachusettsan means he heard the local vernacular spoken during his youth by people, that is, people who were born at the beginning of the 19th century; this gives him unequalled authority that later linguists do not have, or at least to the same extent. His intuitive understanding of the speech of older speakers is certainly a precious asset. Furthermore, he knew James R. Lowell (b. 1819), the author of the *Biglow Papers* (1848) and the two men discussed issues of pronunciation together. Thirdly, he was a linguist and a keen observer of phonetic detail, although I sometimes find his descriptions confusing and difficult to interpret. Grandgent begins the discussion about ME /au/ and ME /ɔ/ by stating that the British English pronunciation of the <au> of *caught* and the <o> of *cot*:

are rounded, and are uttered with a tongue-position similar to that of ɔ and ɒ, but lower. This was doubtless the American practice in the 18th century, although some speakers, while sounding the *o* of “*or*” as ɔ, apparently gave to *au* and *aw* the value of â. Nowadays, American ɔ is nearly always unrounded, and *is formed by drawing the tongue as far back and as low down as it will go* (my italics); American o has generally become retracted a or â, but in Maine, and with many speakers in all eastern New England, it retains a little rounding.

In Chapter 21, I pointed out the difficulty of interpreting the quality of earlier phonetic symbols and we encounter the same problem here. Using the American Dialect Society’s phonetic script, Grandgent distinguishes between high-mid [ɔ] (IPA [ɔ:]), low-mid [ɔ] (IPA [ɔ]) and low [ɔ] (IPA [ɒ] in this passage)). However, he compares <o> to a “retracted [a] and [â]” to which he gives the value of [ɔ]. The <â> symbol conforms very precisely to the standard Parisian French pronunciation of *pâte* [pa:t] “dough” (as opposed to [pat] for *patte*, “paw”). This association with *pâte* is confirmed by his statement that it is “formed by drawing the tongue as far back and as low down as it will go.” This can only be [ɑ:] (once again I have added the diacritic indicating length). Interestingly, his reference to the inhabitants of Maine and eastern New England suggests that they pronounced *Taught* words with [ɑ:] or a slightly rounded [ɒ:] vowel.

Like Krapp (1925, 141), Grandgent (1899, 219) then goes on to say: “Nowadays American ɔ (i.e. IPA [ɒ]) is nearly always unrounded.” Reading between the lines, I take this to mean that he believed <or> spellings and *caught* and *law* words were pronounced [ɒ:] during the 18th century but that, at some relatively recent point (mid-19th century?), the vowel was lowered to [ɑ:]¹⁶

This [ɑ:] pronunciation is reinforced by Kenrick (1773) and Nares (1784) who

16 Few French people pronounce *pâte* “dough” as [pa:t] anymore, even in Paris, but rather with the same <a> as in *patte* [pat] “paw.” I have noted that some younger speakers still maintain a slight quantitative distinction: [pa:t] versus [pat] respectively.

both compare the pronunciation of this vowel with French <â>. Kenrick writes the following:

No. XIX of the foregoing Alphabet, or V. and VII. Of the Dictionary. The short a, and the long a, au, aw, etc. as in *NOT*, *WHAT*, *awl*, *caul*, *awl* [sic]. This sound is common in many languages; although the distinction of long and short, is preserved in few or none but the English. The French have it exactly in the words *ame*, *pas*, *las*, etc. (Kenrick, 1773, 38)

Here it is clear that *not* and *what* are short while *caul* and *awl* are long. Note that *awl* is one of the key words that Franklin uses to describe this sound as well. The quality of the French examples are mixed with *ame* (normally spelt *âme*), hence the vowel being [ɑ(:)]. Today, *pas* and *las* [a], are now stigmatized and are heard in the French vernaculars. The orthoepists going back to Wallis and Wilkins distinguish these vowels only by their length and not by their quality which they all describe as being identical. Even at this early date, the long forms of the *Taught* vowel must have wavered between [ɔ: ~ ɑ:] but not [ɔ:] at this point (cf. Mazarin's interpretation below).

Interpreted literally, this can only mean that, in Massachusetts and New England in 1899, the pronunciation of *caught* and *law* was already realized as [kɑ:t ~ kɔ:t] and [lɑ: ~ lɔ:] just as it is for most speakers of contemporary GA. Following Grandgent, 18th-century Massachusettsans, including Franklin, would had the slightly rounded [ɔ:] and this is the way I have interpreted his *aa* character (cf. Chapter 25-28). The description is not clear enough to determine the precise pronunciation of *cot*, however, but I assume that it too was pronounced in the vicinity of [kɔ:t] with (coastal?) New Englanders making the phonemic distinction between *caught* /kɔ:t/ and *cot* /kɑ:t/. This is very close to the transcription I noted of a ninety-four-year-old New Bedford man (Massachusetts) who did treat these two words as phonemically distinct. For him *caught* was realized as /kɔ:t/ and *cot* /kɑ:t/ but also, as might be expected, *taught* /tɔ:t/ and *tot* /tɑ:t/ (German, personal notes, 2015). To my ear, the distinction was barely discernible.

As he explains in the passage above, the <o> of <or> is pronounced [ɔɪ ~ ɑɪ], as in *born* [bɔ:ɪn ~ bɑ:ɪn]. Here *born* followed the same route as *caught*, with an [ɑ:] pronunciation, [bɑ:n], as is still the case in the local eastern Massachusetts vernacular.

At the beginning of his article, Grandgent (1899, 207) presents a list of key words showing the value of his phonetic symbols, and provides six different realizations of <o>. Based on descriptions he has provided in different passages of his article, I interpret them as follows:

Fig. 21.1 Grandgent's account of New England back mid and low vowels.

Grandgent's phonetic symbols	Key word	IPA equivalents
o	<i>Hot</i>	[ɒ(:) ~ ɑ(:)]
ò	<i>Whole</i>	[ʊ]
ô	<i>Hole</i>	[ɔ:]
ɔ	*German <i>Sonne</i>	[ɔ] (unrounded?)
ô	*German <i>Sohn</i>	[ɔ:]
ɔ	<i>Born</i>	[ɒ(:) ~ ɑ(:)] (V: + r-loss)

*My analysis of these German values should be viewed with caution.

It should be borne in mind, however, that he may have been describing aspects of his own pronunciation here which may explain some of the contradictions between his account and MacKintosh's below. As we can see, Grandgent presents these back vowels in descending order, with his "[o]" *hot* at the summit of this list while *born* appears to reflect the lowest pronunciation, which he transcribes as having low back [ɒ]¹⁷ and which most likely had a low (open) [ɑ:] variant.

Based on his description of *cot*, one would expect *hot* to be pronounced [ɑ ~ ɒ]. However, elsewhere in his article, Grandgent (1899, 217) quotes Duncan MacKintosh's French-language grammar and phonology of English who gives a different description of the realization of *dot* and *born*.

MacKintosh, 1797, identifies o in *dot* with French ô; o in *born* is the same sound lengthened; but au in *haul* is like the French â, "mais plus long encore." ... it is possible that our unrounded ɔ is the descendent of Mackintosh's â = au, aw, which has attracted and swallowed the original ɔ = o(r); in Franklin's pronunciation, on the other hand, ɔ had apparently absorbed â.

It looks very much like MacKintosh's <ô> is the equivalent of short French [ɔ] of *beau* "handsome" ([dɔt], possible influence from Scots?). For MacKintosh, *born* was pronounced [bɔɪn] as many Americans still pronounce it nowadays.¹⁸ Once again *Taught* words are described as being pronounced as in French [ɑ:]. As we have seen above, the English and French values of IPA /ɔ/ are quite different phonetically due to the unrounded nature of the French sound which, as I have explained previously, is often understood by English speakers as /ʌ/ (*loque* [lɔk] and *luck* [lʌk]).

Based on other late 18th-century evidence provided by Grandgent, it would

17 Cooper describes this as "barbarous." Daines, gives *swut* for "soot" as [swat]. Dobson analysis of *swut* is as follows: [swu:t > swut > swat], corresponding to [sut] and [sat].

18 It is my pronunciation of this word.

be safest to conclude that the most common pronunciation of *dot* was close to [ɒ ~ ɑ], as it is today. However, like Grandgent, MacKintosh identifies the vowel of *haul*, and presumably *caught* and *law* as well, as being the equivalent of long French <â>, that is, French [ɑ:]. This corresponds well to the account given by Kenrick and Grandgent above (cf. Walker, 1791, xv).

Franklin doubtlessly heard variant pronunciations of these kinds of pronunciations on a daily basis but, considering the evidence accumulated so far, the descriptions and transcriptions of [ɒ ~ ɑ] presented in his RMS may reflect a pronunciation that was also current in London and thus not necessarily his own. There is evidence to support this (cf. Chapter 22). For the time being, however, from what we have seen, [ɒ(:) ~ ɑ(:)] seem to be the best candidates for *dot*, *cot* and *hot*.

This leaves us with the following phonetic range (although I may be mistaken, I have left out his German examples as they seem to have little bearing here): *whole* [ʊ] - *hole* [ɔ:], *born* [ɒɪ], *hot*, *cot*, *dot* [ɒ ~ ɑ], *haul*, *law*, *caught* [ɑ:] (and [ɒ:] in eastern New England).

Mazarin (2020, 14) has come to the same conclusion I have, and considers that /ɑ:/ is the oldest English pronunciation of <au> words, not /ɒ:/ or /ɔ:/ and explains the evolution nicely in the following passage:

In type B, this monophthong (i.e. [ɑ:] in *Taught* words) attained phonemic status as /ɑ:/, and it remained essentially unchanged, like GOAT and GOOSE, right through type D in the 1700s. By that time TAUGHT was finally rounding to /ɒ:/, perhaps under the influence of its merger with NORTH and CLOTH.

The French evidence cited above (Kenrick, 1773; MacKintosh 1797; Nares 1784; Walker 1791; Grandgent 1899) all points to the pronunciation of *pâte* with [ɑ:], coupled with Grandgent's description of the vowel as being pronounced with the tongue going as "low as it will go," reinforcing Mazarin's conclusion. If true, this changes our entire perception of the evolution of *Taught* and *Law* words. In another passage, Mazarin (ibid.) adds

American English generally retains the old low-back [ɒ:] for TAUGHT and CLOTH, although many Americans are presently reverting to the even older [ɑ:].

Given the evidence, it is possible that Americans never fully abandoned this older pronunciation of *Taught* words. This [ɑ: ~ ɒ:] duality may reflect ongoing competition between the two variables since the establishment of the first 17th-century English settlements in North America. We shall return to this point when we consider diphthongized pronunciations of *Lot*, *Taught* and *Walk* words in southern Appalachia (cf. Chapter 19 and 23).

This late 19th- and 20th-century analysis of the data stands in stark contrast to the evidence provided by the rhymes of the New England poets. Quite frankly,

the contradictions are perhaps the most daunting that have been broached in this book so far. This is linked to a fairly large subclass of ME /ɔ ~ ɒ/ words (*Lot* words) which were first lengthened and fell together with ME /ɔ:/ ~ ɒ:/. These vowels were then raised to [u:] and this aforementioned subclass was then progressively lowered and shortened to [u ~ ʊ] and then [ʊ ~ ʊ?].

For this reason, I thought it best to devote all of Chapter 22 to the problems linked to the treatment of New England short u and o which I analyze as part of a broader process. Indeed, we shall see in the next chapter that Orbeck's 17th-century <oo> and <oa> spellings of *Lot* and *Goat* words, such as *loot(t)* for "lot," *clooth* for "cloth," *roode* for "road," *lood* for "load," etc. all suggest a raised variable. The raising of [ɔ ~ ɒ:] > [u:] and its shortening to [ʊ ~ ʊ?] in different environments will be absolutely essential to understanding the most difficult category of imperfect rhymes (cf. Orbeck's examples).

Chaucer (*Canterbury Tales*) shows that these spellings were already common in 14th-century London: *moost* "most," *oon* "one," *everemoore* "evermore," *hooly* "holy," *clooth-makyng* "cloth-making," *boold* "bold," *brood* "broad," *noon* "none," ***hoom*** "home," *loor* "lore," ***hoole*** "whole," *oother* "other," *soore* "soar," *brooch* "broach," ***hoot*** "hot," *coold* "cold," ***stoore*** "store," *rood* "rode," *soong* "sung," *hoost* "host," ***goot*** "goat," ***stoon*** "stone." We shall return to these examples in Chapter 22. The words appearing in bold type are classic key words of New England short o showing that the ultimate geographical source of this feature may be the varieties once spoken in the 14th-century London area.

5.2 ME /ɔ/ > [ɪ]

Just as we saw above for ME short u, which can be fronted to [ɪ] or [ɛ], ME short o /ɔ/ also underwent the same kind of shift in a number of words. Krapp (1925, 165) quotes Dearborn (1795), who condemned *ingyons* ['ɪŋənz] "onions," while the Southold records (NY) give *civer-lid* (1675) for "coverlet" (French *couvre-lit*). Hall (1942, 97) records both ['kʌvə-lɪd] and ['kɪvə-lɪd]. Citing Dearborn (*The Columbian Grammar*, 1795) Krapp (1925, 165) notes *kivvers* for "covers." Dobson (1968, 573) points out that this pronunciation probably entered the English language with the pronunciation *kever* from OF *cuevre* (modern French "couvrir"). This raised pronunciation [ɛ] > [ɪ] studied in Chapter 17 would explain *kiver*. Dobson (ibid.) cites Gil (1619) who claims it is an "eastern English" characteristic and Wright (1905) concurs, recording *kiver* as being found primarily in the eastern dialects of England, although he records it for Yorkshire as well. Lowell also gives *kiver* ['kɪvə(ɪ)] "cover," *diskiver* [dɪs'kɪvə(ɪ)] "discover" in his *Biglow Papers*. Likewise, Hall (1942, 97) gives not only *kiver* ['kɪvə(ɪ)] "cover," *diskiver* [dɪs'kɪvə(ɪ)] "discover" but also what he describes as the "old-fashioned" pronunciation of "government" ['ɡɪvə-mɪnt]. Grandgent (1899, 238) also cites its existence in

Massachusetts. Here is yet another example of continuity from older English varieties and American ones.

While this section concerns only one word class, its significance resides in the fact that *kiver* was closely associated with eastern English dialects. That it should be recorded not only in New England and New York, where one would expect its presence, but also in Appalachia, implies that this was common to all of the colonial American koines and supports the analysis that Appalachian English phonology has been largely influenced by English varieties from the Northwest Midlands to eastern and southeastern England. Again, such (Suffolk and Essex) pronunciations were commonly heard in Boston but belonged to a register that Franklin strenuously avoided and for which he felt the utmost disdain.

5.3 ME /ɔ + r/ and ME /a + r/

In keeping with the GVS raising of [ɔ: ~ ɒ:] to [ɔ: ~ u:], Dobson (1968, 675) gives examples of words which spelt <o + r + e> and <oa + r> which were raised to [u:ɪ] during the 16th and 17th centuries. He quotes Cooper (1685) and Hodges (1649) who considered “boar” and “bore” to sound “near alike,” which he interprets to have been realized as [bu:ɪ] and [bɔ:ɪ] respectively. Hodges, a Londoner, also systematically pronounces “more” as [mu:ɪ] and both he and Cooper pronounced “sworn” as [swu:ɪn]. Yet, Cooper pronounced “hoar” and “hoarse” as [hɔ:ɪs] while Hodges records them both as [u:ɪ]. Oscillations between [ɔ:ɪ] ~ [ɔ:ɪ] ~ [u:ɪ] must thus have been common in dialectal speech. Cooper gives “board” [bu:ɪd] (but it is presented as [bɔ:ɪd] by Gil and Hodges).

Shortened realizations must also be envisaged. For instance, we have seen that Mazarin has analyzed Cooper’s English as having [ɹ]. Hodges had it as well as Lodwick and Wilkins. It is thus very possible that a [ɹ] variant of this [ɔ:ɪ], among others, may well have been substituted in a number of these examples here.

Dobson (1968, 483) describes ME short o [ɔ or ɒ] + /r/ as being [ɔəɪ] before [ɪ] but long ME /o:/ + /r/ as [ɒ:ɪ]. He describes how these resulted in doublets such as in these examples given by Bullokar (1580): [bɔərn] ~ [bɒ:ɪn] for *born*, [toərn] ~ [tɒ:ɪn] for *torn*, [kɔərd] ~ [kɒ:ɪd] *cord*, [swɔərn] or [swɒ:ɪn] for *sworn*. Likewise, *Glory* (OF *glorie*) is pronounced either [ˈglɔəɪ] or yields [ˈglɒ:ɪ] by the lengthening of short o before r (cf. [glu:ɪ] above). Other examples with either [ɔəɪ] or [ɒ:ɪ] are *forge*, *porch*, *report*, *port sport* and *fork*. Recall that a similar class of words is cited by Grandgent (1899, 218) as being pronounced [ɔ:ɪ] (rather than [ɒ:ɪ]), i.e. *porch*, *pork*, *port*, *sport*.

Both pronunciations appear to have been well established in colonial America and survivals of the [ɔəɪ ~ ɔə] pronunciation are recorded in both GA and by

Hall (1942, 33) as [ɔə], [ɑə] or [ɒə] with the latter being “more common.” I have adopted a broad interpretation of his transcription, which is as follows: *torment* [ˈtɒə-mənt], *corn* [kɒə-n], *storm* [stɒə-m]. This last example recalls Franklin’s transcription of *storm* [stɒɪm] as *staarm* (1768, 471) suggesting a certain kinship between the modern Appalachian pronunciation and early New England speech and, indeed, that of the 18th-century London English model itself.

In my own experience in western and southwestern areas of Virginia, <or> / <oar> / <ore> words are nearly dissyllabic in examples such as *bored/board*: [ˈbɔə-d], *hoard* [ˈhɔə-d], *whore* [ˈhɔə]. Yet, Dobson’s examples showing variants with [u:ɪ] demonstrate that there had to have been a close [ɔ:ɪ] variant which would have permitted the rising of <or> to [glu:ɪ] for “glory” or [swu:ɪd] for *sword*. Cooper (1685), for instance, gives *boord* [bu:ɪd] (or is it [bɪɪd]?) for “board” and *bor’d* which Dobson assumes is pronounced with high-mid [bɔ:ɪd]. Interestingly, an old-fashioned Lancashire pronunciation of *whore* is [(h)u:əɪ].

As explained previously, the lack of clear phonemic boundaries cross-dialectally between [ɔ:] ~ [ɔ:] ~ [ɔ:] ~ [u:] is probably what permitted the kinds of shifts we have seen where these vowels, depending on the dialect, were treated as either phonemes or allophones, allowing the kind of drift one observes between pronunciations such as [swu(:)ɪd], [swɒ(:)ɪd] and [swɔ(:)ɪd] for “sword” (Dobson, 1968, 487). Note in passing that, in Appalachia, traditional speakers still pronounce *sword* as [ˈswɔə-d]. In all likelihood, Franklin pronounced it [sʊɔ:ɪd] ~ swɒ:ɪd].

5.4 New England Poets

In the last chapter, we examined examples of Franklin’s rhymes which suggest that he still pronounced *word*, *worse* and *work* with [ɔɪ] and not centralized [ʌɪ ~ əɪ] (cf. ME /ur/, *Nurse* words) (*curse*, *purse*, etc.). We also observed that the centralization of <or> is attested in a few words found in the early colonial town records. The Watertown records of Massachusetts, for instance, give *wurk* [wɔɪk] for “work” (1672) and *furr* [fɔɪ] for “for” (1679). However, Franklin consistently transcribes “for” as [fɒɪ] in his reformed alphabet (i.e. presented as *faar*). One can assume that in colonial Massachusetts, centralized pronunciations of “world,” “worse,” “word” and “worth” coexisted with the following realizations [wɔɪld], [wɔɪs], [wɔɪd] and [wɔɪθ] (cf. below) (cf. Dobson, 1968, 487). Likewise, in this couplet, he pairs *north* and *worth*, which suggests another [ɔɪ] rhyme.

Cold and cunning come from the *north*:
But cunning *sans* wisdom is nothing *worth*. (1743)

For Franklin, *word*, *worth* and *north* were realized as [wɔɪd], [wɔɪθ] and [nɔɪθ]. Note that Lowell transcribes “north” as *no’t*h [nɔ:θ] or perhaps [nɔ:θ] as in

contemporary Massachusetts English. The question in the next two couplets is whether *worst* ~ *first* and *curse* ~ *worse* also appear to have lower back [ɒɪ] realizations of these words.

Given that the poets varied their pronunciations on occasion, it is not possible to tell which pronunciation is favoured but, in the following examples, I would wager that Franklin advocated the [ɒɪ] pronunciation in “worst” [wɒɪst] and “first” [fɒɪst]. The spelling of *forst* (1682) for “first” in the Groton records of Massachusetts would seem to support this hypothesis. Centralized *furst* [fə(ɪ)st], 1664, shows that both were possible, however. Given that the latter was stigmatized, [fɒɪst] is far more likely here.

Heavy by Mem’ry made, and what’s the *worst*,
At second-hand as often as at *first*. (1757)

Some confirmation of this hypothesis comes in the form of Franklin’s RMS transcription of “reformation” which he spells *refaarmefyn* [ˌɹɛfɒɪˈmɛʃən] with an *aar* spelling rather than centralized *yr* [əɪ]. This adds weight to the hypothesis that he may have pronounced at least some of these <ir>, <er> and <ur> as [ɒɪ], a stage preceding full centralization to [ʌɪ ~ əɪ] (Chapter 27).

Nevertheless, this quatrain showing an ABAB rhyme gives another example of *worse* which is rhymed this time with “discourse” (cited in Chapter 20). However, Franklin transcribes it as *diskors*. If it is not an unconscious slip back into traditional English orthography (as happens from time to time in his transcriptions), [ˈdiskɔɪs] may have been a competing form as it is today, and not [ˈdiskɔɪs], which he would have easily spelt *diskaars* in his RMS spelling system. This may be an attempt to pronounce these words in a way which he considered to be more elegant. Again, this would seem to suggest that, in Franklin’s everyday speech, “worse” was pronounced [wɒɪs].

Lalus who loves to hear himself *discourse*
Keeps talking still as if he frantick were,
And tho’ himself might no where hear a *worse*,
Yet he no other but himself will hear.¹⁹ (1736)

Although [ɔɪ] cannot be ruled out for *discourse*, the [ɒɪ] pronunciation seems to be reinforced by the *course* and *force* rhyme in the following couplet.

Can he (worn down in Nature’s *Course*)
New-brace his feeble Nerves with *Force*? (1740)

Again, in his RMS, Franklin transcribes most <or> words as [ɒɪ] and occasionally <or>, but the significance of this is not easy to determine. For this reason, I am not certain to which degree these exceptions may be phonologically significant

¹⁹ Note the *were* ~ *hear* rhyme with both words pronounced [ɛɪ ~ ɛɪ].

and whether they may alert us to variant pronunciations.

5.5 ME /ɔr/ ~ ME /ar/

In Sequence 4 of Chapter 19, we examined the 18th-century pronunciations of <ar> spellings of *war*, *warm*, etc. and concluded that Franklin and his contemporaries in Boston would have still realized such words as [æɪ], at least in more formal circumstances. Most linguists who have studied Franklin's RMS are in general agreement on this point (cf. Chapter 25 for a review of their work). The New England poet Dwight often rhymes words in <or> and <ar>, suggesting that he pronounced <ar> and <or> [ɑɪ ~ ɔɪ] in these rhymed contexts.

Nevertheless, the signs point to a wide range of possible pronunciations according to the register and regional origins of the speakers. The 17th- and 18th-century colonial feature pool would have included a wide gamut of reflexes of ME <or>.

Barlow, for example, gives a number of <ar> ~ <or> rhymes matching *warm* ~ *storm*, *warms* ~ *forms*, but we have seen that Dwight's rhymes are far more prolific with examples such as *form* [fɔɪm] ~ *warm* [wɔɪm] and not [wæɪm]) (three times), *inform* [ɪn'fɔɪm] ~ *warm* [wɔɪm], *inform'd* [ɪn'fɔɪmd] ~ *charmed* [tʃɑɪmd] (not [tʃæɪmd], etc. as well as a string of rhymes tying *alarm* [ə'lɑɪm ~ ə'lɔɪm] ~ *storm* [stɔɪm] ~ *warm* [wɔɪm]. I concluded that these examples demonstrate that these <war-> spellings were no longer [wæɪ-] in their poems, or at least that a shift was well on its way. Nevertheless, most of these match words with <or> spellings: *inform* ~ *storm*, *inform* ~ *storm*, *born* ~ *scorn* (3 times); also *court* ~ *sport*, *course* ~ *force* and *lords* ~ *words*, again, all presumably pronounced in the area of [ɔɪ ~ ɑɪ].

We also saw at the end of Chapter 19 that the Plymouth town records give occasional examples of *warn* and *wharf* with <or> spellings, demonstrating that as early as the 17th century, some speakers already had this "vulgar" low back [ɔɪ ~ ɑɪ], especially when preceded by initial prevocalic <w> /w-/ or <wh> /hw/. I concluded that these lowered, unrounded pronunciations were almost certainly stigmatized sociolinguistically until the end of the 18th century.

William Barnes spells standard <or> as <ar> in his 19th-century Dorset poems. Based on his rhymes and supporting dialectal studies of both Dorset and Somerset, Burton concludes that the pronunciation varies between [ɑɪ ~ ɔɪ]. Nevertheless, most examples are given as [ɑɪ]: *carn*, "corn," *var* "for," *harn* "horn," *marnen* "morning," *starm* "storm."

For nearby Somerset, I found that Leith (1895) gives many of the same <ar> spellings for such words in her novel: *marnen* ['mɑɪnən] for "morning" (p. 37), *ztarm* [zdaɪm] for "storm" (p. 44), *harses* ['hɑɪsəz] for "horses" (p. 45), *martel* ['mɑɪtəl] for "mortel," *Lard* [laɪd] for "Lord" (p. 107)... (See the rhymes

of the New England poets below for parallels.) She also gives *tratted* ['tɹatɪd] for “trotted” (p. 42) and *zaft* [zaft] for “soft” (p. 53), or perhaps with the same 15th- and 16th-century [a] pronunciation cited by Lass above. Wright (1905, 532) gives “morning” with r-loss, a comparatively “recent” phenomenon, as [ˈmɑːnm] for Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Berkshire, Northamptonshire, Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, Dorset, Devon and Wiltshire. The traditional contemporary Massachusetts pronunciation of morning would also be [ɑː] with r-loss.

The first poem that Franklin ever published (in the form of lyrics) at the age of thirteen appeared in 1719 in his brother’s newspaper *The New England Courant*. It contains an interesting rhyme matching *quarter* and *shorter* which we have already discussed and which indicate that he too lowered the pronunciation of [æɹ] > [ɒɹ] in words like “quarter.”

Teach and Maynard on the <i>Quarter</i> , ²⁰	//ˈtɛːtʃ ənd ˈmɛːnæɪd ɒn ðə ˈkwɔːtɪɹ
Fought it out most manfully,	fɒt ɪt ɹʊt mɔːst ˈmænˌfʊləɪ
Maynard’s Sword did cut him <i>shorter</i> ,	ˈmɛːnæɪds ˈswɔːd dɪd ˈkɹɪt hɪm ˈʃɔːtɪɹ
Losing his head, he there did die.	ˈluːzɪŋ hɪz hɛːd, hɛɪ ðɛɹ dɪd dɪɪ //

Once again, this is contrary to his 18th-century pronunciation of *war* as [wæːɹ]. This [ɒɹ] pronunciation for *quarter* would appear to reflect a lower-status pronunciation of the time which, in itself, would not be surprising considering Franklin’s young age and lack of formal schooling at this stage (Chapter 2). I have referred to his own description of this poem as “wretched stuff” in the “Grub-Street-ballad-style.” In this specific context, the [ɒɹ ~ ɔːɹ] rhyme is clearly called for and Franklin latched on to it. This implies he was fully conscious of the linguistic variety he heard daily in the streets of Boston. Being the clever boy he was, it is likely that he was fully capable of manipulating various registers for poetic purposes, code-switching at will. He exploited this talent for decades in his *Poor Richard’s Almanack*. Confirmation of this comes from Franklin’s father, who scornfully stated to Franklin that ballad writers were often no better than beggars.

In early 18th-century New England, lowered pronunciations were considered less “polite” and thus totally in keeping with the genre of a poem dealing with the death of Blackbeard the pirate, a poem intended for a popular audience as Franklin said himself. This observation corresponds to Orbeck’s example *quorter* (Plymouth, 1692) which I would transcribe as [ˈkwɔːtɪɹ]. Nevertheless, he also gives the example *querter* [ˈkwɛːtɪɹ] (Dedham, 1696) which I take to be a raised variant of [ˈkwæːtɪɹ].

20 I.e. Franklin imagined the two men fighting on the quarter deck!

Conclusion

The data outlined above highlight numerous difficulties, involving outwardly impossible rhymes of *Strut*, *Foot*, *Goat* and *Goose* words and pose a serious stumbling block. How does one explain the fact that not only do the New England poets match words from all these categories, but 17th- and 18th-century English poets do so as well? Each example demands a separate diachronic explanation. One of the most convincing explanations comes once again from the 17th-century Massachusetts town records, combined with key observations by 17th-century orthoepists. This will be the topic and goal of Chapter 22.

We shall see that the raising of these long back vowels developed in a similar way to the raising of long front vowels:

ME high-mid front /e:/ > [i:]

ME high-mid back [ɔ:] > [u:]

ME low-mid front /ɛ:/ > [i:]

ME low-mid back [ɔ:] > [u:]

ME low-mid back [ɔ] > [u:]

In both cases, we must imagine that, cross-dialectally, multiple paths were followed involving centralization, laxing, shortening, lengthening and pauses at various stages of development. Depending on the variety, bridge vowels played a critical role in facilitating the various trajectories that were followed.

22. New England Short u and Short o

Introduction

Before turning to the discussion of diphthongs and consonants in Chapter 23, we must pause a moment to examine more closely both the nature and the origins of New England short o but also of a related vowel category I term New England short u (see Chapter 20). This topic is central to the argument developed throughout Chapters 20 and 21, as it provides essential insight into the so-called “imperfect rhymes” of the New England poets identified in Chapter 15. Its importance is underscored by the fact that it involves the entire gamut of back vowels discussed thus far.

It also concerns a critical aspect of the Massachusetts koine that Franklin originally spoke during his youth. We shall see that, during his fifteen years in London, he tried to accommodate his accent to what he believed was the polite usage of cultivated speakers in that city. He managed to do this with varying degrees of success and, as we shall see in Part IV (in particular, Chapter 28), his attempts were only partly successful, given that numerous elements of his native New English idiolect creep into the proto-phonemic transcriptions of his RMS.

The geographic origins of New England short u and short o, i.e. a vowel close to [ʊ ~ ʊ̃], appears to find its source across a broad swath of the East and West English Midlands and parts of East Anglia identified by Wright (1905) and Wells (1988). This also corresponds to the general area where I have identified the major linguistic input from England. The following processes were involved:

- a. The laxing and lowering of ME tense /u/ in *Strut* words to /ʊ/ and then to [ʊ ~ ʊ̃] in the localities concerned in a number of restricted word types and environments.
- b. The raising of ME /ɔ:/ to /u:/ and later shortening to /u/ [u ~ ʊ] and lowering to [ʊ] by the 16th century leading, to a merger between *Strut* and *Foot* words, both being pronounced [ʊ] in large areas of southern England. Many *Goose* vowels were shortened and also caught up in this process and lowered in the same way: *approve*, *move*, *prove*, *proof*, *hoof*, *roof*, etc.
- c. Subvarieties in the aforementioned regions of England resisted the *Strut*-

Foot split (i.e. when *Strut* vowels were lowered and further centralized to /ʌ/ in much of southern England by the mid-17th century). *Blood* and *Flood* fell together with these and moved to [ɤ] before descending to [ʌ]. In Norfolk *Strut*, *Blood* and *Lot* words remained [ɤ] alongside [ʊ] and [ʌ] as presented synchronically in the *Survey of English Dialects* (Upton & Tilling, 1970, 1971) and as demonstrated diachronically by Wells (1988, 198-199).

- d. The traditional accounts propose that ME $\bar{o}$ /ɔ:/ ~ ɒ:/ and the lengthened examples of ME /ɔ/ were raised to [u:] and [ɔ:] during the 15th and 16th centuries, affecting large numbers of *Goat* words (*road*, *boat*, *bone*, *stone*, *home*) but also *love*, *above*, *shove*, *come*, *done*. I have observed the same raising in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* in *Goat* words, thus pushing the date for this phenomenon to pre-GVS times (cf. Chapter 21). By the 16th century, the vowels of a considerable number of these words were shortened in southern and Midlands dialects and followed a path similar to that described in a), b) and c) above, that is, /u:/ > /u/ > /ʊ ~ ɤ/. In time, in southern England and in North America [ʊ ~ ɤ] > [ɤ] > [ʌ]. Although Dobson (1968, 586) may well be right that [ʌ] is not attested before Daines (1640), [ʊ ~ ɤ ~ ɤ] variants probably did not yield to [ʌ] in Massachusetts until the 19th century.

It appears that these characteristics were common enough in the vernacular speech of 17th-century settlers from the aforementioned regions, including Norfolk and Lincolnshire, for them to coalesce and be integrated into the feature pools of the New England koine. If so, this resulted from the “sharedness principle.” From the evidence I have seen, Franklin's Massachusetts English appears to have neutralized the vocalic distinction between many *Lot* and *Goat* words (*both* ~ *sloth*, *boast* ~ *cost*, *frost* ~ *boast*...) which would all appear to have been pronounced in the neighbourhood of short [ɤ ~ ɤ] (or perhaps [ɔ] if they are approximate rhymes). The distinction between these variants would thus have been relatively minimal and this alone explains the numerous rhymes of this kind.

I have chosen to present the most recent linguistic evidence for New England short u and short o first and then to work backwards chronologically. For this reason, the chapter is organized as follows:

- Section 1: Grandgent's and Krapp's analysis of New England short u and short o;
- Section 2: 20th-century American and English linguistic evidence and sources;
- Section 3: a comparative study of the data offered by English orthoepists' descriptions, the New England poets and the 17th-century town records.

Many of the points made here are intended reinforce arguments that have already been broached in previous chapters.

Note Bene

Before beginning this discussion, I would like to signal the work of Professor Harold Whitehall, University of Indiana.¹ After I had finished writing this book and while skimming through early articles published in *American Speech*, I came upon a remarkably informative and insightful study written by him in 1935 (published in 1941). It is entitled “An Elusive Development of ‘Short o’ in Early American English.” Because of the importance of his research, I felt compelled to include a number of his observations and conclusions for two main reasons:

- a. to inform the reader of his pioneering work on this largely unexplored topic and,
- b. because it reinforces many of the arguments and hypotheses I have proposed in Chapters 20, 21 and 22.

In reading it, I was struck by how similar our thinking was, even after a ninety-year gap. First of all, he adopted a methodology similar to mine, which we both partially inherited from George Krapp who pioneered not only the exploitation of early textual documents, chief among which being the New England and New York town records, as well as the orthoepists observations and, in addition, the rhymes of both English and American poets. In this regard, Michael Montgomery was also indebted to Krapp’s influence on his own methodologies and acknowledged this himself.

After accumulating and presenting a large number of examples taken from original sources in England and America, he goes on to provide convincing, practical analyses to make his points. His conclusions are often very close to my own and, had I known of his work earlier, this chapter would have integrated his contributions slightly differently.

I have taken what I consider to be his most relevant observations and analyses as well as some of his supporting examples and have inserted them in appropriate sections of this study which, as I mentioned above, was already written when I discovered this little jewel of scholarship. He breaks down his article under the following headings:

1. oo, ou, and u spellings for o not followed by a nasal;
2. parallel rhymes of ME o with ME *ō*, *ū* and u;
3. spellings for o before nasals;
4. parallel rhymes for o before nasals.

As the reader will see, I organized my examples using a similar scheme but in a more detailed manner (cf. sections 4.1-4.4 below).

1 Harold Whitehall was born in Hull, Yorkshire. Like myself, he was sensitive to a number of very interesting parallels between early American English and Lancashire dialect. As a Yorkshireman, however, one wonders why he would not have focused on his own variety given that it shares so many characteristics with Lancashire English.

In the introduction to his article, Whitehall makes the following statement, expressing his astonishment at the phenomenon to be studied in this chapter.

If the 18th century grammarians are to be trusted (he could have added the 16th and 17th century orthoepists as well), a number of words now pronounced with the reflex-vowels [ɔ, ɒ, ɑ] of ME o had formerly a vowel identified with the reflex of ME u; and if rhymes and spellings can be trusted, *their number was surprisingly extensive* (my italics). The phonological problem implied is less spectacular than baffling. (Whitehall, 1935, 192)²

As I expressed in Chapter 15 (sections 1.3.6-1.3.8), my initial impression of this phenomenon was identical to Whitehall's. When I began my study of Franklin, Dwight and Barlow's rhymes, I was amazed to find a cohort of bewildering matches that would be thoroughly unacceptable for a contemporary RP/GA speaker. Some involved front mid vowels while others primarily concerned mid and low back vowels. For this reason, I classified them under the heading of what I called "imperfect rhymes." One of the major goals of this study was to try to explain why 80-85% of the poets' rhymes were perfect and the reasons these minor categories were not. While I considered the front mid vowels to be easy to explain through the GVS, a large percentage of the rhymes involve the entire gamut of back vowels ranging from ME ū /u:/ down to ME ȝ /ɔ: ~ ɒ:/ and their shortened counterparts. It was in this circumstance that my interest in New England short o was thoroughly piqued. This is how I explained the goals of this particular aspect of this study:

The task is thus to make sense of these rhymes (cf. in Chapters 16 through 23, with special concentration on the back vowels in Chapters 20-22). We will see that the answer to these questions will contribute to clarifying a number of historical and dialectological mysteries. Some of the clues to these phonetic riddles are also to be found in 19th- and 20th-century English and American dialects. The answers will serve as a guide to assist us in identifying Franklin's personal phonemic system and will be presented in the conclusions to Part III (Chapter 24) and Part IV (Chapter 28).

This led to the exploration of early English and American sources (i.e. English orthoepists, American town records, and Modern English and American dialectal parallels) that have been exploited in the preceding chapters.

1. Krapp and Grandgent's Testimonies

In the preceding chapter, I stressed how important Grandgent's account of New England short o is. First, he was born and bred in Massachusetts and had heard all these pronunciations firsthand as pronounced by older vernacular speakers.

² Note that vowel length is not indicated here.

Many of these were born during the first quarter of the 19th century at a time when many of the characteristics of colonial American English were still in common use (although already associated with rustic speech). Secondly, he knew James Lowell personally (born 1819), the author of the *Biglow Papers* (1848), and had discussed the details of this so-called New England short o with him. To repeat, both men agreed that [ʌ] was not yet heard in Massachusetts. Finally, Grandgent was also a phonetician making his observations doubly significant.³

As we have already seen, this phenomenon is closely bound to the history of ME /u/, ME /ɔ:/, ME /ɔ:/ and, as we shall see in more detail here, a subclass of *Lot* words originated from lengthened ME /ɔ/ words. The constant shifting in the quantity and quality of vowels throughout the period in question has made the entire question exceedingly complicated and, for that reason, it has not been an easy task to tie the threads.

The first reference Grandgent makes to New England short o in his article, “From Franklin to Lowell,” appears in a passage in the introduction:

The distinctive features of the present New England speech are the suppression of consonant r unless it precede a vowel, the use of [a] and [o] where other dialects have respectively [æ] and [ɔ] (i.e. IPA [ɒ]), and the shortening of ô (i.e. IPA [ɔ:]) to ò (i.e. [ɪ]): all these phenomena, *except perhaps the last* (my italics), have developed since Franklin’s time. (Grandgent, 1899, 208)

This statement by Grandgent is noteworthy because he suggests that r-lessness was a relatively recent phenomenon in Massachusetts, at least in educated speech, and that it was not a trait shared by Franklin, who openly encouraged the pronunciation of /r/, as did Webster (cf. Chapters 25-28). The New England records demonstrate that r-lessness clearly existed as early as the 17th century and there are numerous examples of this in the town records. It was also associated with “vulgar” speech. For the precise quality of his /r/, see Chapter 27.

More directly pertinent to this chapter, he views New England short o as being an older phenomenon which suggests that it dates at least to the 18th century if not before. Grandgent’s impressions are thus of crucial importance to our analysis. Again, he is the only early linguist to have actually heard and described the vowel with precision when it was still in fairly common use:

In a great many words ô (i.e. IPA [ɔ:]) is shortened and slightly advanced (my italics) in rustic New England speech becoming ò (i.e. IPA [ɪ]). This vowel is used by educated New England speakers in about fifty common words and their derivatives, and it certainly prevails in the cultivated usage of this region in *Polk*, *polka*, *whole*, and probably in *both*, *folks*, *Holmes*, *most*, *only* and some others. Franklin does not mention the sound; but Webster says in his Diss. 1789: “o is sometimes shortened in common parlance, as in *colt*.”

3 Curiously, Whitehall does not cite either Krapp’s or Grandgent’s research in this domain.

Although he states that “Franklin does not mention the sound,” his rhymes clearly demonstrate that it was part of his natural phoneme inventory. Recall that this study is the only one to have ever taken into account the phonetic nature of his rhymes. Based on his descriptions, Grandgent specifically states that <ô>, (i.e. IPA long [ɔː]), is “shortened” to [ɔ] and then “slightly advanced” to “[ò],” that is, [ɤ]. Mazarin and Wright give similar descriptions for England below but with a slightly higher realization, [ɤ̟]. Keep in mind Grandgent’s [ò] and Wright’s [ù] to describe a quasi-identical sound.

In his list of key words which we saw in the last chapter, Grandgent (1899, 207) gives “hole” [hɔːl] as the key word for his <ô> while “whole” is the key word for his New England short ò.” Although he did not put it this way, *hole* /hɔːl/ and *whole* /hɤl/ are thus minimal pairs and phonemically distinct in Massachusetts English. The phonemic status of New England short o is also asserted by Avis (1971, cf. below). Moreover, *whole* is also given as a key word for New England short o by virtually every observer who has ever studied the phenomenon in both New England and England. Note that Lowell spells “whole” *holl* on numerous occasions in his *Biglow Papers* (not *hull*), thus suggesting Lowell and Grandgent’s vowel is [ɤ] and thus slightly lower than [ɤ̟], which is high-mid and marginally advanced or centred in relation to [ɔ].

It is perhaps pertinent that, on the surface at least, there may be an apparent contradiction between Grandgent’s precise description of this “short, slightly advanced o” [ɤ] of his key word “whole” and the fact that it is often spelt <u> in older American texts (*hum* for “home,” *hull* for “whole,” *stun* for “stone,” *rud* for “road,” *unly* for “only,” etc.). The point is that it must have sounded sufficiently close to the <u> of colonial *push*, *put*, *pull* for New England scribes and clerks to spell these words with a <u>.

Mazarin provides a partial explanation when he presents what he describes as the “o-like” [ɤ] of *Strut* words as being the dominant pronunciation of this class of word *prior to 1600*. Wright (1905, 17) also gives a pronunciation of *stone* for Leicestershire which he transcribes as [stùn] (cf. Chaucer’s *stoon* and Watertown, Groton and Plymouth *stoone* below):

a sound formed with the lips more open than for u. Acoustically *it somewhat resembles an o sound* (my italics). It is common in the midland counties in such words as *bull*, *full*, *come*, *up*, *song*, *wrong*. (ibid., 17)

Wright’s statement that, acoustically, the [ù] symbol “somewhat resembles an o sound” is an important observation in that he too views it as a “kind of” [u] vowel, as well as the fact that he includes words such *stone*, *come*, *bull*, *full*, *song* and *wrong* as key words for this sound. These words are systematically associated with short o or short u in the poetry of the New Englanders but also in the poetry of English poets of the same period, as we shall see below. “Stone” along with

“home,” “road” and “whole” are particularly salient key words associated with this short New England /o/ vowel. This shows that even trained linguists had difficulty pinning down the exact nature of this sound and we shall see that this inability to identify the precise nature of Wright’s “o-sounding” [ù] and Grandgent’s o-sounding [ò] is echoed by the 17th-century New England clerks, who also have difficulty reconciling the two sounds, recording it variously as <u>, <oo> or even <oa>!

To repeat, Wright (1905, 17) identifies this o-sounding ù pronunciation with the English Midlands. This looks very much like the same region of the Midlands referred to by Wells (1988) but also Chambers and Trudgill (1998), as having resisted the *Strut-Foot* split. We have seen Wells (1988, 199) describes *Cut* vowels, along with *blood* and *flood*, as being pronounced [ɹ], presumably at a time prior to 1600. If so, its survival in New England offers a remarkable example of colonial lag, but also proof of the continuity of this and other features of southern English dialect usage in North America.

Krapp, on the other hand, was convinced that Franklin’s pronunciation of *Strut* words was [ʌ] (not [ɹ ~ɻ]). As we have seen previously, Grandgent and Lowell claimed this [ʌ] pronunciation had not yet been heard in Massachusetts.

Franklin’s transcriptions for the vowel of words like *some*, *such*, *rushing*, indicates a sound which can have been only [ʌ], as he describes, *um*, *un*, as in *umbrage*, *unto*, etc. and as in *er* (i.e. as in *hunter*). This is Webster’s “short u,” as in *come*, *love*, *sir*, *bird*, *her* (*American Spelling Book*, p. 25). (Krapp, 1925, 164-165)

We have seen that, in the 17th century, Wilkins, Hodges, Lodwick and Cooper all pronounced orthographic <u> as [ɹ]. Citing Whitney (1874, 216), Krapp (1925, 132) asserts that the sound of the vowel of New England short o is restricted to *none*, *whole*, *home*, *stone*, *smoke*, *folks*, *coat*, *cloak*, *throat*, although *close* was nevertheless slightly different in pronunciation than this [ʌ]:

... he (Whitney) has heard most often from others the same sound in *bone* and *boat*. Now [o:] (i.e. [ɔ:]) is usually described as a mid-back vowel with lip rounding, and the vowel of *son*, *some*, etc. is *also a mid-back sound though the part of the tongue elevated in forming this sound lies a little in front of the back position*, best described as *half-back*. (my italics) (Krapp, 1925, 132)

The distinction he makes is not particularly clear. However Krapp makes three important observations:

- a. The reference is specifically to mid-back vowels, hence [ɔ:].
- b. In relation to [ɔ:], it is “a little in front of the back position.”
- c. If the vowel is mid-back, he states that the tongue is elevated in producing this sound.

Importantly, he is certainly not specifying a low-mid [ɔ:], which I contend was Krapp's symbol for IPA [ɒ:]. Rather, he speaks of a sound at the mid-back [ɔ:] level but that "lies a little in front of it." If the tongue is a little elevated, he can only be describing slightly elevated [ɤ] and obviously not lower-mid [ʌ]. In his defense, however, he may have imagined the vowel table in a marginally different manner to the modern IPA chart below.

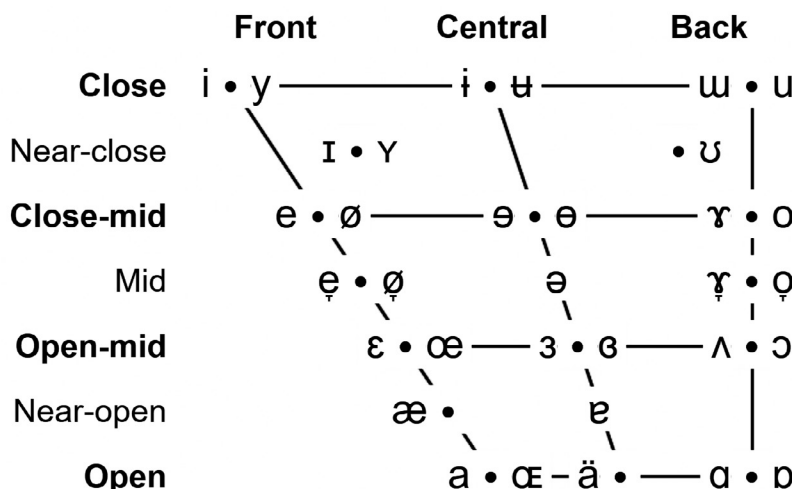


Fig. 22.1 IPA chart. Wikipedia, "Table of Vowels," CC BY-SA 4.0, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Table_of_vowels

Put another way, the slightly fronted and shortened version of [ɔ:] is [ɤ]. If so, the sound described by Krapp corresponds well to assessments made by Wright (1905) and Mazarin (2020), both of whom also propose high-mid [ɤ], but not Grandgent's mid [ɤ]. We have seen that Wright states that this sound is typical of the Midlands and parts of East Anglia and he uses the ù symbol to describe what he calls an o-sounding vowel. Mazarin (2020) also favours this fronted high-mid [ɤ] interpretation and provides sound historical reasons for this.

1.1 New England Short <u>, <oo>, <o>, <oa>

There is obviously a degree of wavering in the quality and quantity these vowels. The result is that their exact nature is difficult to pinpoint for the good reason that variability was inherent to the system to begin with, this being a consequence of competition within the feature pool. Grandgent (1899, 217), for instance, corrects Dearborn's spelling of "home," *hum*, stating that this is "doubtless intended to represent *hòm*, not *hem* although [ɛ] is actually used in Connecticut" (cf. Dearborn, 1795). This [ɛ] symbol was used at the time to denote modern IPA [ʌ], a sound, to repeat yet again, he and Lowell claim was

not heard in Massachusetts. So, it is abundantly clear that, for him, orthographic <u> was something other than [ʌ]. This leaves us with the interpretation by two contemporary American linguists who seem to be defining a sound between [ʏ ~ ʏ̥], not [ʌ], and this despite Krapp's initial assessment. It cannot be ruled out that Dearborn had in mind [ʊ] here, as it still is pronounced in northern England.

Krapp (1925, 133) illustrates the phenomenon by quoting a delightful little poem entitled Holme's *Rhymed Lesson, Urania*. Written in the last quarter of the 19th century, the objective was to discourage New England children from pronouncing these shortened o vowels. . The contrast between [ɔ:] and [ʏ] is quite apparent here.

Learning condemns beyond the reach of <i>hope</i>	[ɔ:]
The careless lips that speak of <i>sōap</i> for <i>sōap</i> ;	[sʏp] – [sɔ:p]
Her edict exiles from her fair <i>abode</i>	[ɔ:]
The clownish voice that utters <i>rōad</i> for <i>rōad</i> :	[ɹʏd] – [ɹɔ:d]
Less stern to him who calls his <i>cōat</i> a <i>cōat</i> .	[kɔ:t] – [kɔ:t]
And steers his <i>bōat</i> , believing it a <i>bōat</i> ,	[bɔ:t] – [bʏt]
She pardoned one, our classic city's <i>boast</i>	[ɔ:]
Who said at Cambridge <i>mōst</i> instead of <i>mōst</i> ,	[mʏst] – [mɔ:st]
But knit her brows and stamped her angry <i>foot</i>	[fɔt ~ fʏt]
To hear a Teacher call a <i>rōōt</i> a <i>rōōt</i> .	[ɹu:t] – [ɹʊt ~ ɹʏt]

Interestingly, shortened *soap*, *road*, *coat*, *boat* and *most* are associated in the poet's mind with the shortening of *root* [ɹu:t], another category of vowel (i.e. *u* > *ʏ*). In fact, other sources shorten *abode* and *board* to [ʏ]. We have seen in the preceding chapter that, during the 16th and 17th century, *foot*, along with *blood* and *flood*, were also initially pronounced [u:] and reduced over time to [u] and then to [ʊ ~ ʏ] (cf. Chapter 21).

If I am not mistaken, the earliest example of this New England short o (a misnomer given the broad range of vowels it concerns) is provided by Krapp (1925, 135) who cites a passage from the Hempstead records, in the New York colony, demonstrating that the phenomenon was not only confined to New England. The passage was written in the year 1669 and outlines the tasks of a cowherd:

He shall make it his *hull* im ployment to ceep [ki:p] the said *heard* [hɛɪd] this next insuing [ɪn'su-ɪŋ] Sommer ['sʏməɪ? ~ sɔməɪ]⁴ (i.e. he shall make it his *whole* employment to keep the said *herd* this next ensuing summer)

4 Note also the *pin-pen* merger in *im ployment* and *insuing*.

So, what sound did this early New England spelling of “whole” really represent? Is it Grandgent’s <ò> [ɣ] or the un-lowered *Strut* vowel [ʌ]? Furthermore, when did it descend to [ʌ] in New England?

To demonstrate how complex the interpretation of these IPA symbols can be, however, Mazarin (2020, 12) considers that the value of Alexander Ellis’ [e] symbol corresponds to IPA [ɣ] while MacMahon (2001, 419) interprets [e] as representing [ə]! What then is the real quality of this older [e] symbol? [ʌ], [ə] or [ɣ]? Without audio records of traditional speakers pronouncing these words, it is well-nigh impossible to tell. Nevertheless, we are still within a relatively tight phonetic zone.

As I have often repeated, there is probably no “either-or” response to these questions. Grandgent himself states that [e] (i.e. [ʌ]) was a possible variant pronunciation for Connecticut during the second half of the 19th century, while his [ɣ] appears to have been dominant in Massachusetts. He adds the following comment:

I have never heard it (i.e. *e* = IPA [ʌ]) elsewhere (i.e. other than Connecticut), and Lowell once told me he had never heard it⁵ [i.e. in the Boston-area of Massachusetts]. (Grandgent, 1899, 217)

Among the words he cites in which this [ɣ] appears is “*home, none, stone, whole*, and their compounds.” Despite Grandgent and Lowell’s assertions that they had never heard [ʌ] in Massachusetts, this certainly does not preclude the possibility that some Massachusetts speakers outside the Boston area and, perhaps in other areas of the state, may also have used it just as they did in Connecticut.

Based on these observations and evidence from the New Englanders’ rhymes, I have allowed for some variation [ɣ ~ ɣ̃] but also [ʊ ~ ʌ] for New England as a whole. We have also observed fluctuation between [ɣ], [ʊ] and [ʌ] in Norfolk in recent times (Orton & Tilling, 1970). It seems likely that the phonetic range for this region of eastern England reflects aspects of 18th-century pronunciation. A similar phonetic range must have been current in colonial New England as well.

Krapp (1925, 48) draws our attention to Webster’s *American Spelling Book* (Webster, 1783, 13) in which he writes that “as <a> in ‘late’ makes short <e> in ‘let’ ([ɛ]), and <e> in ‘feet’ [i:] makes short <i> in ‘fit’ ([i ~ ɪ]), so as <o> [ɔ:] in ‘hone’ makes short <o> in ‘home.’” Note that this description of the short vowel of *home* is absent in Webster’s 1809 re-edition (1809, 13). In Webster’s spelling lists, he also gives the following words which Krapp views as having short [ʌ]: *none, stone, home, bolt, jolt, bould, dolt, moult, coat, dost...* Since Webster was from Connecticut, [ʌ] may indeed have been his natural pronunciation as opposed to Massachusetts [ɣ ~ ɣ̃]. But this depends on whether [e] has the value of [ɣ]

5 Recall that Lowell was born in 1819 and would have been raised around older people who spoke like Franklin.

(Mazarin, 2020, 12; Grandgent, 1899), in which case our hypothesis is saved, or whether it represents [ə] as MacMahon (2001, 419) has proposed, in which case it is not. Source evidence for Massachusetts leans in favour of the former.

Dobson's assessment is that centralized [ʌ] existed, next to more frequent raised [u: ~ ʊ] pronunciations, as early as the 17th century and that it spread thereafter. Whatever the validity of these distinctions between the Connecticut and Massachusetts realizations, it does seem to suggest, as would be expected, that several realizations in this focused area were in competition and were used in accordance to the register and region, namely, a conservative [ɤ ~ ɶ] which would have been dominant in Massachusetts next to a more evolved lowered [ʌ] pronunciation in Connecticut, where the majority of settlers originated from Essex according to Fischer (1989, 32). My own experience tells me that there already must have been considerable spill-over and overlap in several of the states concerned.

With regard to *Goose* and *Foot* words, Grandgent makes a parallel between his fronted, back mid [ɤ] pronunciation and the shortened pronunciations of *hoof*, *proof*, *roof*, *room* and *soon* (all pronounced with /u:/ in GA and RP) which implies they were not quite the same vowel for him (but perhaps close enough to rhyme?). We have already seen the link made by the author of the juvenile poem cited above (*boat*, *coat*, *road* with [ɤ]) and “root,” [ɹʊt ~ ɹʌt]. In the same vein, Grandgent writes:

Similar, in a way (my italics), to short ɒ is the short u in such words as *hoof*, *proof*, *roof*, *room*, *soon*. It goes back to the last century, but was probably regarded until recently as a vulgarism. Dearborn, 1795, gives “*huff*, *ruff*, *spunfull*” in his list of “Improprieties.” (Grandgent, 1899, 217)

In view of Grandgent's insistence that Dearborn's *hum* should really be pronounced *hòm* [hɤm] and his interpretation of *huff*, *ruff* and *spunfull* as being “similar, in a way, to short ɒ [ɤ],” one can suppose that the realization of *Foot* words was not quite the same realization as [ɤ] but very close to it. It is a pity that he was not more precise on this point. Having said this, for the reasons discussed in Chapters 20 and 21, I would interpret his “similar, in a way” to refer to slightly raised [hɤf], [ɹɤf], [spɤnfəl] (or perhaps even [ʊ] for other speakers).

This shortened pronunciation is still widespread for *hoof*, *roof* and *room*, but it is no longer the case for *proof* or *soon*. Recall Krapp's list of such shortened <oo> vowels cited in the preceding chapter: *aloof*, *boot*, *coop*, *Cooper*, *food*, *groom*, *hoof*, *hoop*, *Hooper*, *nook*, *proof*, *rood*, *roof*, *rook*, *rooster*, *root*, *soon*, *soot*, *spook*, *woof* (Krapp, 1925, 149).

Likewise, we have seen that Dobson (1968, 160) interprets Charles Butler's spelling of *gud* and *blud*, for “good” and “blood” to be [ʊ] and not [ʌ], although he does provide scattered evidence that this centralized realization did exist. Given

the period, [ʊ] was a likely variable. Note also that northern England still has an /ʊ/ phoneme (with relevant allophones in [ʊ]) for *blood* and *flood*.

This analysis is supported to some degree by Dobson (1968, 509) who cites Turner's *Art of Spelling and Reading English* (1710), noting that the latter also describes *home*, *stone* and *whole* as having what he describes as a ME short u (Dobson cites Gabrielson, *Studia Neophilologica*, ii. 158-9). These same key words are quoted time after time and, thus, were most likely pronounced in the area of [ʊ ~ ʊ ~ ʊ], proving that the so-called "New England short u ~ o" phenomenon is without doubt an English inheritance and interlinked, that is, not only tied to "short o." This is straightforwardly proposed by Trudgill without even an afterthought (2016).

Wright (1905, 509) gives *home* [hʌm] for the home counties and *only* [ʌnli] for Herefordshire and Oxfordshire, [ʊnli] for Norfolk and Suffolk and *stone* [stʊn] for Norfolk and Suffolk, which Dobson (1968, 621) claims is due to "late shortening." Wright also gives [stʌn] for Norfolk, showing that [stʊn] ~ [stʌn] co-existed until recently alongside *one* [wʌn], *none* [nʌn]... The SED data is more precise phonetically speaking.

Wright's examples of *come*, *song* and *wrong* cited above demonstrate that the Midlands, East Anglia and New England shared a [ʊ] pronunciation in the vicinity of [ʊ ~ ʊ]. This offers a far better understanding of the New England poets' frequent rhymes of *come* ~ *doom* ~ *dome* as well as *wrong* ~ *song* ~ *young* ~ *tongue*. This American link with Norfolk and the English Midlands cannot be a coincidence. Note too that the same kinds of rhymes occur regularly in the poetry of Shakespeare, Herrick, Jonson and Pope... (more on this in the conclusion to Chapter 24).

Whitehall (1941, 194-199) provides yet more rhymes of this kind by English poets, in particular, Alexander Pope. These rhymes reinforce Wright's contention that *wrong* and *song* (in 1905!) were indeed pronounced with an o-sounding ʊ vowel throughout the Midlands. Whitehall classes these rhymes under the heading "Parallel rhymes for o before nasals:" *among* ~ *young* (Herbert); *anon* ~ *done* (Butler); *belong* ~ *young* (Pepys); *on* ~ *down* (Pope), *pond* ~ *wound* (Butler); *song* ~ *hung* (Duke); *song* ~ *young* (New England Primer); *strong* ~ *flung* (Dryden); *strong* ~ *young* (Pope); *throng* ~ *young* (Pope); *wrong* ~ *young* (Ames).

Whitehall (ibid.) provides some early examples showing spelling evidence supporting the contention that these rhymes shared the same vowel, namely [ʊ ~ ʊ]: *amoungst* "amongst," 1613, Suffolk (Kökeritz); *beyound* "beyond," 1636, Dorchester, Mass.; *boombar* "bombard," 1696, England; *soungys* "songs," 1450, Suffolk (Kökeritz); *stroung* "strong," 1450, Suffolk (Kökeritz); *wroung* "wrong," 1450 (cf. Wright's realizations of *wrong* with his o-sounding ʊ, 1905) and Suffolk (Kökeritz); *rOUNgfully* "wrongfully," 1662, London (cf. also, Kökeritz,

1944, *Mather Flint on Early Eighteen-Century Pronunciation* and Kökeritz, 1953, *Shakespeare's Pronunciation*).

2. Recent American and English Accounts of Short o

2.1 Walter Avis

Phonetically, Avis describes it as a “fronted and lowered mid-back position and ending with a prominent in-glide, [əə] or monophthongal [ə].” One interpretation is that this would be a fronted variant of [ɔ] which, is in fact [ʌ]. The current IPA model shows [ə] to be a high-mid central vowel (i.e. highly fronted) variable, in other words, a variable even more centralized than [ɻ], but slightly higher and backed in relation to [ə] (cf. Fig. 22.1). If so, this would make it nearly impossible to hear the distinction between [ə] and [ə] in the [əə] diphthong. It appears to be much closer to [ʊə ~ ɪə] than the former. A pronunciation of *foot* was recorded in Norfolk very precisely as [fɹət] (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 593).

In his informative 1971 article, Walter Avis describes “New England short o as being phonemically distinct from GA [ou] and, at the time he wrote the article, “highly recessive.” Indeed, it was already recessive in Grandgent’s day, being restricted to only fifty words among educated speakers. Phonetically he describes it as a “fronted and lowered mid-back position and ending with a prominent in-glide, [əə] or monophthongal [ə].” He gives the following examples for this realization as being “*toad, stone, coat and boat and road*. The monophthongal types occur most often in *toadstool, stone, wall, stone walk, smokestack, folks, most and whole*” (Avis, 1971, 391). A number of the salient examples cited by Grandgent seventy-one years previously are repeated here, showing an obvious case of phonological continuity since colonial times (see also Willard, 1840 below).

Avis then divides the following inventory of words into four classes in which [əə ~ ə] appear: a) commonly, b) occasionally, c) less frequently and d) never. I have eliminated this final class from the discussion for practical reasons. His examples are as follows:

a) *boat, coat, smoke(stack), folks, most, almost, toad, road* (but see two paragraphs above), *Rhode Island, home, stone (stonewall, whet-, grind-, soap-, cherry-, peach-), bone, soldiering, whole, yoke;*

b) *goat, broken, cloak, kofe, loads, poge, toast, to close, none, colt, holt* (“hold”), *poultry, bonny clabber, swollen, yolk, harmonica;*

c) *oats* (cf. Barnes for Dorset), *cove, posts, don’t, doughnut, sofa...* (Ibid., 393)

Fig. 22.2 Examples of New England short o.

<oa>	boat, coat, toad, road, goat, cloak, toast, oats,
<oCe>	smoke, home, stone, bone, whole, yoke, broke, kofe; pogeey, close, none, bonny, swollen, harmonica, cove, sofa
<olk/t>	folks, holt, poultry, yolk
<ost>	most, almost, posts
<on't>	don't, (see won't & wont below)

Avis adds that:

a study of the diaphones [əə] and [ə] in *road*, *coat* and *whole* reveals clear contrast with the diaphones in *good*, *caught*, and *hull* (i.e. of a ship) indicating that [əə/ə] do not belong to the phonetically similar and adjacent phonemes /ʊ/, /ɔ/⁶ and /ʌ/. Furthermore, for most speakers the diaphones [əə/ə] are in contrast with [ou] diaphones in such identical or analogous environments as ***road/rode***, ***coat/shoat***, ***most/coast***, ***home/loam***, ***whole/knoll***. In these pairs the first member usually has [əə/ə]; the second member never has these phones. It follows from the foregoing evidence that [əə/ə] and [ou] belong to different phonemes, which will henceforth referred to as /ə/ and /o/ respectively. (Ibid., 392)

Avis states here that *road*, *coat*, *most*, *home* and *whole* could be pronounced as either [əə] or [ə] in New England (more on the quality of [ə] below). Although neither Grandgent nor Krapp make any mention of this diphthongal pronunciation, Avis' description corresponds well to Burton's account of the same phenomenon in William Barnes' Dorset poems: "home" *huome* (cf. Leith, 1895 above for Somerset, *whoam*), "road" *ruoad*, "stone" *stuone*, "coat" *cuot*, "whole" *whuole* which Burton transcribes as a diphthongal [ʊʌ] or [ʊə] (Burton, 2010, 94-96).

Alexander Ellis (1884, cited in Burton, 2012, 96) transcribes many of these examples in his *On Early English Pronunciation* as /uə/, examples which were furnished to him by Barnes himself. Burton cites other scholars of the period who also give diphthongal pronunciations: *bone*, *load*, *afford*, *home*, *whole*, *board*, *bold*, *cold* as well as *goats*, *alone*, *stone*, *coal*, *colt*, *shoulder*, etc. These are all suspiciously familiar and the question is, why should the same words be treated similarly in New England and in England, especially so far to the Southwest?

The recent New England examples cited by Avis are quite clearly inherited features from 17th-century colonial New England, and England itself as we can see from the evidence provided by Dobson. Like Burton for Dorset, Orbeck (1927,

6 This is another example of the confusion between RP /ɔ:/ and GA /ɒ:/, ɑ:/.

43) gives the spellings of “road” and “roadway” as *rooad* [ɹuəd ~ ɹʊəd ~ ɹæd] (Dedham, 1693; Plymouth, 1701) and *rooadway* [ɹuəd ~ ɹʊəd ~ ɹæd,wei/wæi] (Watertown, 1673). Avis’ realization of “road” is [ɹæd], which ties in perfectly with Barnes’ *ruoad* and Orbeck’s *rooad* [ɹæd] once again showing remarkable continuity between 17th- and 20th-century Massachusetts English. On this point and many others, the bond between early English sources and New England English is undeniable.

It is therefore virtually certain that the diphthongal pronunciations just described may also have existed as variant forms in Franklin’s own speech and that of his fellow New England poets. Recall that, in Chapter 16, I also argued that Franklin’s final (stressed and unstressed) -ly, -y, -ity suffixes (*naturally*, *woefully*, *eternity*, *deny*, *supply*) were pronounced [əi], another direct connection with 16th- and 17th-century English pronunciation.

Many of the words Burton and Avis recorded are also given by Trudgill for Norfolk (2016, see below), but not under their diphthongal variants. All these factors tie in well and explain many of Franklin’s rhymes and those of the New England poets that I classified as “imperfect rhymes” (cf. Chapter 15).

For Dorset, Burton proposes that the weight of the evidence would support an [uə] pronunciation to explain some of these rhymes. He offers some perceptive insights proposing that these /ʊʌ ~ uə/ diphthongs “may explain rhymes such as *coat* ~ *cut* ~ *shut* ~ *strut* or *bone* / *stone* ~ *alone* or words ending in /ʌn/” (Burton, 2012, 96). More likely, perhaps, is that both *stone* and *bone* were pronounced as /ʌ/ in Dorset, corresponding to older New England [ɹ]. Burton’s analysis should be taken as a serious alternative interpretation of the data presented previously. A similar /uə/ diphthong or a reduced form of it close to [ɹ ~ ɻ ~ ɔ] has been posited until now and, as Avis indicates for /ə/ and /əə/, these two variants have coexisted until the present day. Both have been generally transcribed as <u> in the older texts and, as we have seen, appear to have been confused with or limited to [ʌ] by many linguists.

Willard (19th edition, 1840, quoted by Grandgent, 1899, 216), asserts that:

“o begins with a sound, which is never heard alone, except in the New England pronunciation of such words, as *whole*, *home*, *stone*, which they pronounce shorter than *hole*, *comb*, *bone*,” and ends with ũ, “as in do”...

It sounds here like Willard is describing something like [ɹu]. Willard’s observation is very important in that he gives precisely the same key words as linguists before and after him: *whole*, *home*, *stone*. Nevertheless, we have just seen that Avis and Burton include *bone* in the short o list while Trudgill has *comb* with [ʊ] which appears to be the shortened form of 17th-century [ku:m] (Dobson, 1968, 486), [kʊm ~ kɹm]. It is quite clear from the rhymes with *doom*, *gloom*, *soon* and *moon*, etc. seen in Chapter 21 were also pronounced [ʊ ~ ɹ] in

New England and almost certainly back in areas of southern England.

As for diphthongal /ou/, it was also given as the RP realization in the first 1917 edition of Daniel Jones' *Everyman's English Pronouncing Dictionary*. The current [əʊ] realization appears only in later editions. Grandgent states that this "breaking began in England," suggesting that this realization was introduced in America under English influence.

As I pointed out above, Avis describes his IPA /ə/ symbol as having "fronted and lowered mid-back position." However, Shorrocks (1998, 205) portrays [ə] as being slightly fronted at an intermediate position between [ə] and [ø]/[œ]. It is the "fronted" + "lowered mid-back" description that is troubling here in that it seems the two linguists are using the same symbol to define two different sounds. I can go no further than this in solving this apparent contradiction. Adopting a literal interpretation of Avis' "mid-back" description, it would seem to be a sound close to [ɤ ~ ɘ] (i.e. fronted short [ø]) rather than [ə].

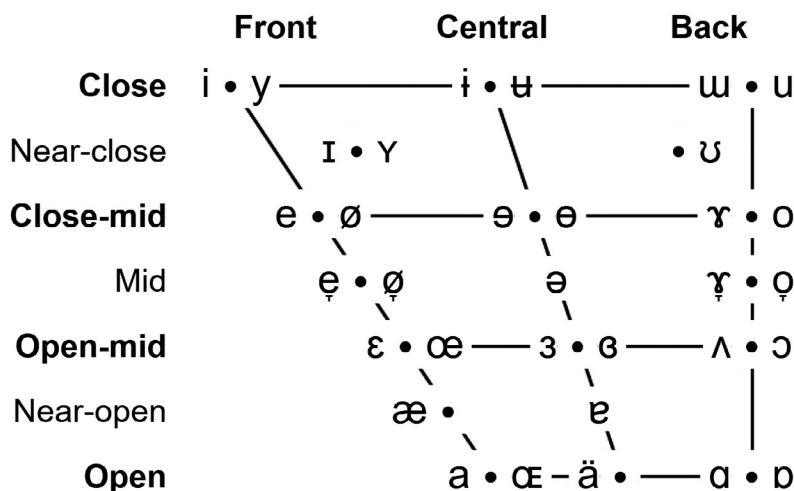


Fig. 22.3 IPA chart. Wikipedia, "Table of Vowels," CC BY-SA 4.0, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Table_of_vowels

2.2 East Anglia and New England Short o

A partial response to this dilemma is provided by Trudgill's discussion of a similar feature occurring in East Anglia, particularly in Norfolk and Suffolk. I have made numerous allusions to his work in the previous chapters. He writes:

There are a number of distinctive features in the speech of the people of Eastern New England which distinguish them from other Americans. One of these is the pronunciation which American dialectologists call "the New England short o." This refers to a short pronunciation of words like *home*, *stone* and *road* which is not found anywhere else in the USA. Americans represent this pronunciation by writing "hum," "stun," "rud"... (Trudgill, 2016, 186-187)

Importantly, Trudgill does not even seem to question that the source of this New England pronunciation to the Massachusetts' founder generation (without using this term) which was, initially, partly composed of settlers from Norfolk (including Franklin's maternal grandparents) and especially Suffolk and eastern England more generally. Recall that Fischer (1989, 31) identified Haverhill, Essex as being the centre point of the exodus to New England (cf. Chapter 11). People from Suffolk and surrounding areas were thus particularly numerous in Boston in Franklin's childhood. Fischer provides evidence based on the origins of Boston householders that estimates that 59% of the Boston inhabitants were from Suffolk and Essex while a further 10% were from London (Fischer, 1989, 36). Nevertheless, we have seen that the population mixes were not the same everywhere. Twenty-two miles due west of Boston, for instance, only 36% of the population of the town of Sudbury was from Suffolk, Essex and Hertford while another 36% were from Wiltshire, Dorset and Hampshire. Another 9% was from "London" (cf. Chapter 12). This last point is not particularly informative either since we have no firm idea whether these "Londoners" were born and bred in the city or whether they were merely passing through.

Grandgent believes New England short o was in use at least as early as the 18th and probably before. Unlike Avis, however, Trudgill describes this Norfolk short vowel as having the value of /ʊ/, specifying that words such as *stone* and *comb* share the same vowel as *could* and *stood* while *boat* and *coke* rhyme with *put* and *cook* and *whole* rhymes with *full* (spelt *hol* by Lowell in his *Biglow Papers*), while *suppose* and *only* are also pronounced with this /ʊ/ vowel: /sə'pʊz/ and /'ʊnli/. Hence, Trudgill gives *stone* /stʊn/, *comb* /kʊm/, *boat* /bʊt/, *coke* /kʊk/ and *whole* /hʊl/ (my transcriptions). He makes no mention of the existence of a /ʊə/ diphthong, however, which makes the connection between the Dorset and New England data closer than with East Anglia on this point.

Just as stated by Grandgent and Avis for New England and Burton for Dorset, Trudgill goes on to explain that /ʊ/ is "particularly common in the word *home*" and then he cites the Norfolk poet, John Kett, who rhymes *road* and *wood* in his poem "The Tawny Wood" (cited in Trudgill).

No more you 'oon't fly up an' down this *road*
No more you 'oon't go in an' out the *wood*. (Trudgill, 2016 186-187)⁷

Significantly, in view of the New England rhymes we shall investigate below (i.e. ME ɔ:), Trudgill can thus rhyme *Goat* words and *Foot* words, *road* [ɹʊd] ~ *wood* [wʊd] and *home* [hʊm] ~ *comb* [kʊm] and *coke* [kʊk] ~ *cook* [kʊk]. This represents a broader inventory of word types than those described by Avis, this time matching GA [ou] and [u]. Admittedly, however, Avis describes the modern New England examples as limited in number as well as recessive. Put another

7 Trudgill's rendition of initial /w-/ + /ʊ/ appears similar to Franklin's <uuld> for "would" which may be another common inheritance.

way, Trudgill's evidence shows that a Norfolk poet could rhyme a slightly broader range of *Goat* words with *Foot* words, a category which we have not explored in the preceding chapters.

Recall that Grandgent also indicated that, even in 1899, it was only used in about fifty words by educated speakers (but in a "great many" words used by rustic speakers). It is the "great many" that catches our attention in that it implies more generalized use of this shortened vowel in previous centuries. Again, the pronunciation of the 18th-century New England poets would probably have been classified (according to Grandgent's standards) as "rustic." Paradoxically, Trudgill's evidence for Norfolk and Suffolk and Burton's descriptions for Dorset correspond better to the rhymes used by Franklin and the New England poets than to the accounts provided by either Grandgent or Avis for New England. It is this English evidence that informs us about what the original nature of Franklin's idiolect must have been.

Having said that, Trudgill indicates that this Norfolk /u/ pronunciation does not extend to words such as "known" or "towed" which, as we shall see shortly, was not the case in 18th-century New England where at least some <own> spellings (*known*, *shown*, *blown*) must also have been shortened to a monophthong, resulting, presumably, from the reduction of long [ɔ: ~ ɔ] with, perhaps, a slightly centralized [ɤ] vowel and later, fully centralized [ʌ] variants.

Moreover, all the New England poets studied also rhyme words like *town*, *down*, *loud*, *crowd* (RP /əʊ/ and GA /ou/) with words having this short o [ɤ] pronunciation. Nevertheless, it is hard to imagine how these could have formed perfect rhymes with other categories of New England short o unless they were monophthongized to [ɤn? ~ un? ~ ɔn?] which they apparently were on occasion, when spelt <o> or <u> by Orbeck (1927). Trudgill certainly could not rhyme these with *Lot* words either. These, as we shall see, are particularly troublesome. But we shall see that a subclass of these also appears to have had raised variants which were spelt variably as <oo>, <ooa> or <oa>.

James R. Lowell (1848) also gives several examples of these in his *Biglow Papers* (1848), some of which have already been mentioned by the aforementioned linguists. For reasons explained in the discussion at the beginning of this chapter, I transcribe his <o> spellings as [ɤ]: *holl* [hɤl] for "whole" (14 times), but, nevertheless, *hum* [hɤm] for "home," *stun(s)* [stɤn(z)] for "stones," *grave-stun* [grɛ:vstɤn] for "grave-stone," *wunt* [wɤnt] for "won't" (but also "wont"). Significantly for our discussion, he also spells certain *Lot* words with <u>, suggesting the same pronunciation: *gut* [gɤt] for "got," *fergut* [fə(ɹ)gɤt] "forgot," but also *wut* [wɤt] "what" and, finally, *wuz* [wɤz ~ wəz] "was." When unstressed or stressed, these last two words are commonly pronounced [ə] and [ʌ] respectively in contemporary GA. Recall Franklin's rhyme of *what* ~ *not* and *what* ~ *that*. In the first case, the most likely match, aside from [(h)wɔt] ~ [nɔt] is

[h]wʌt] ~ [nʌt] with the latter being recorded by Orton & Tilling (1970) as [nʌt] for contemporary Norfolk.

It should be kept in mind that words spelt <u>, <oo>, <oa>, <oCe> and pronounced [ʊ ~ ɔ ~ ɹ] or [ɔ ~ ɹ] are limited to a subclass of words in these orthographic categories. We shall now look again at some of the remarkable Norfolk evidence provided by the SED.

2.3 Modern Evidence from the *Survey of English Dialects* (Orton & Tilling, 1970)

In Chapter 20, I cited evidence from the SED of *Strut* and *Foot* words pronounced as [ɹ] in Norfolk. I concluded that it is now increasingly recessive but, based on evidence provided by Wright (1905) and Wells (1988), this realization must have been more broadly used throughout the region. The link with the 17th- and 18th-century Massachusetts evidence seems apparent.

Some of the 20th-century Norfolk examples examined in Chapter 20 were “foot” [fʌt], [fɹt], [fut] (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 814). The [ɹə] diphthong shows a direct parallel here with Avis’ observations as well as Burton’s for Dorset. “Flood” is also recorded as [flʌd] and [flɹd] (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 424), “road” [ɹud], [ɹɔ:d], [ɹɔd ~ ɹɔ:d], as well as “footroad” [fɹtrɔud] and “roadway” [ɹudwæi] (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 459). Note also the older realization of [wæi] which typically corresponds to Mazarin’s Type A phase of phonological development (i.e. 16th and mid-17th century). This [wæi] variable seems to support my hypothesis that [æi] and [ei] variables were in competition in 17th-century New England and well into the 18th century alongside [wɛ:], the variant Franklin seems to have favoured. Suffolk also has the shortened vowel for “road” [ɹud] with [ɹɹd] variants, but not [ɹɹd]... (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 459).

We saw other examples such as [bɹʃ] for “brush” next to [bɹʃ] (the dominant form) (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 593) or [ɹɹf] (attested in 6 localities) for “roof” next to [ɹɹf] & ru:f] (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 562), [stɹmp] and [stamp] for “stump of a tree” (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 557), [dɹk] for “duck” (5 localities out of 13) beside [dɹk], [ɹɹts] (7 localities out of 13) for “ruts” alongside [ɹɹts] and [ɹɹts] (4 localities out of 13) (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 455) and, finally, [dɹɹmp] beside [dɹɹmp] for “jump” (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 445).

Words like “stump” [stɹmp] and “jump” [dɹɹmp] recall Trudgill’s *comb*. A number of these pronunciations are attested in the rhymes of the 18th-century New England poets (cf. below).

This shows that, even for one English county, the dialectal evidence is far from being uniform and, as explained in Chapters 10-15, this has probably always been the case. As Hall (1942) put it, when speaking of inhabitants “variation was always the rule” among the “old timers” and, I would add, among illiterate or

functionally illiterate basilectal speakers in past times.

3. The New England Poets and the Town Records

3.1 *Lot* and *Strut-Foot* Rhymes: A New England English Conundrum

Chapter 21 ended with a presentation of the diachronic development of ME /ɔ:/ and ME /ʊ/ vowels and their treatment from the 16th to 18th century in England and colonial America. We concluded that the phonetic range for *Lot* words included realizations extending from [ɑ ~ ɒ ~ ɔ] while Görlach's account of ME /ɔ/ falling together with ME /a:/ led to raising of [a:] > [æ:] > [ɛ:] in many words.

We have just seen the *Goat* ~ *Foot* rhymes above. While studying those of the two New England poets in my control group, I was considerably troubled by the numerous rhymes used by all the New England poets who consistently matched words such as *God* ~ *blood* (GA [ɒ] ~ [ʌ]), *God* ~ *wood* ([ɒ] ~ [ʊ]), *God* ~ *food* ([ɒ] ~ [u:]), *God* ~ *bode* ([ɒ] ~ [ou]) and even *God* ~ *crowd* ([ɒ] ~ [au]) (Barlow alone), etc. In this string of rhymes, the key to the mystery was to decipher the precise pronunciation of “God.”

We saw in the preceding chapter that it is broadly described as having ranged from [gɒd ~ gad] to [ga:d] in the 16th century. So, under these conditions, how could “God” possibly rhyme with *Strut*, *Foot*, *Goose*, *Goat* and *Mouth* words? This was one of the greatest challenges I encountered in attempting to make sense of this subcategory of so-called “imperfect” rhymes identified in Chapter 15. It was a particularly daunting task since, I found no clear evidence for the presence of such pronunciations in Franklin's RMS, aside from his occasional hesitations between <o> and his fused <aa> character, which I have respectively interpreted as [ɔ(:)] and [ɒ(:) ~ ɑ(:)] in this specific context (cf. Chapters 26 and 28).

As it turns out, however, upon closer examination, I came to realize that, although the number of *Lot* rhymes with *Goose*, *Foot*, *Strut* or *Goat* words occur with relative frequency, the actual number of *Lot* words having raised [ɤ ~ ʊ] realizations is limited for each of these key words. Significantly, however, the same set of words tends to be rhymed by all three poets studied.

Barlow is the poet who rhymes the greatest number in these categories. For instance, his *God* rhymes are restricted to only six *Lot* words: *trod* (3 examples), *untrod*, *nod*, *rod*, *sod* and *abroad* (4 examples) (see Dobson's quote of Milton and his comments on the pronunciation of *God*, etc. below) On the face of it, we could simply assume that all of these words are pronounced [ɒ(:) ~ ɑ(:)], but as we shall see, this was not the case across the board.

Barlow's *God* ~ *Goat* rhymes are confined to only five words: *abode*, *strode*, *rode*, *codes* and *roads*. We know now that *road* is one of the key words that was

regularly shortened to [ɹɪd] in Massachusetts but also to [ɹʊd ~ ɹəd] in modern Norfolk (Trudgill, 2016; Orton & Tilling, 1970, 1971) and we can assume that the others in this group were realized in a similar way, at least in New England. Barlow also rhymes *God* with *show'd*, *glow'd*, *bestow'd*, *scroll'd*, which may also point to a possible analogous monophthongal, albeit slightly lowered [ɔ ~ ʊ] realization.

Strangest of all to the modern GA/RP ear are the rest of Barlow's *God* rhymes which are matched with *God* ~ *blood* (10 examples), *God* ~ *flood* (8 examples), *God* ~ *stood* (2 examples) and *God* ~ *withstood* (1 example) all of which I have interpreted as having been realized as [ʊ] ~ [ɹ].

Dwight's *God* rhymes are more limited in number but include many of the same word classes:

Lot words: *God* ~ *abroad* (4 examples), *God* ~ *rod* (1 example), *God* ~ *fraud*

Goat words: *God* ~ *abode* (3 examples), *God* ~ *trode*, *God* ~ *road*, *God* ~ *glow'd*

Strut words: *God* ~ *blood* (3 examples)

Dobson (1968, 505) indicates that Milton also rhymes *God* ~ *rod* but also *God* ~ *abode*, *God* ~ *load*, and *load* ~ *trod*, *load* ~ *rod*, the same categories of words as those rhymed by the New Englanders, including Franklin. We can only be dealing with the same kind of phenomenon. Once again, Dobson (ibid., 534) offers precious evidence about a rare pronunciation of *God* and another group of *Lot* words which he describes as follows:

The long close [ɔ:] and the diphthong [ʊə] which occur in the Scottish and Northern dialects in *blot*, *cot*, *God*, *cock*, *cog*, *frost*, *sop*, etc. may develop by modern English lengthening of ME /ɔ/, but in many cases are probably due to a ME variant in /ɔ:/ developed by lengthening in the open syllable of the oblique forms.

This corroborates my interpretation that ME /ɔ/ in these and other words was lengthened to [ɔ:] and raised to [ɔ: ~ u:] and, to explain this treatment of *God*, over time shortened and lowered to variants of [ɔ ~ ʊ ~ ɹ] in some varieties, alongside [ʊə ~ ɹə] variants. This was probably the case in colonial New England. The phenomenon must not only have been northern in that case.

Franklin provides only two *God* rhymes: *God* ~ *road* and *God* ~ *stood*. We have seen above that New England *road* is normally [ɹəd] or [ɹrəd ~ ɹʊəd] or variants thereof. Nevertheless, the words matched with *God* fall in the lexical categories identified by Dwight and Barlow.

On Hope sustain'd he treads Life's devious *Road*,
And knows no Fear, except the Fear of *God*. (1755)

The following couplet is even more surprising for the modern speaker, namely,

God ~ *stood*, but as we have seen, this conforms well with Barlow and Dwight's rhymes.

Confest supreme of Men! his Country's Pride!
 And half esteem'd an Angel, till he dy'd;
 Who in the Eye of Heav'n like Enoch *stood*,
 And thro' the Paths of Knowledge walk'd with *God*;
 Who made his Fame, a Sea without a Shore,
 And but forsook one World to know the Laws of more. (1756)

I have included two additional couplets in this second example to provide some contextualization so that the reader can see that the other rhymes are indeed perfect ones. This is typically the case in the overwhelming majority of the New England poems and, I would ask, why these "God rhymes" would *not* be perfect or, at least, near perfect rhymes as well? At first sight, as puzzling as they are to modern RP/GA speakers, these rhymes appear to demonstrate that the New Englanders pronounced *God*, at least in poetic and perhaps liturgical contexts, as [gɹd ~ gɹd̩] (or even [gɹəd ~ gʊəd]). Considering that [gɔd ~ gɔd̩] variants were attested during early 20th-century England, the latter pronunciations may have also been options.

Whitehall (1941, 196-197) offers an interesting list of these kinds of rhymes by English and American poets under the heading of "Parallel rhymes:" *God* ~ *blood* (Freneau), *God* ~ *flood* (A. Pope), *God* ~ *stood* (A. Pope), *God* ~ *mood* (A. Pope). Taking *pother*, *scholar* and *bottom* as examples, he writes, "When he (i.e. 'the unwary reader') discovers that these and suchlike words may be spelled with the oo of *moon*, *brook* or the ou of *house*, *out*, and be rhymed with words of the *brook* (ME *ō*) or *house*, *out* (ME *ū*) classes, either his brain will balk completely or he will admit the possibility of a pronunciation ['bʊtəm], ['puðəɪ], ['skʊləɪ], etc."

Here these rhymes run the entire gamut of GA [ɑ:] ~ [ʌ], [ɑ:] ~ [ʊ], [ɑ:] ~ [u:]. Whitehall offers similar vocalic matches by Alexander Pope: *nod* ~ *flood*; *rock* ~ *took*; *rod* ~ *wood*. In my view, all of the rhymes are bound to the same vowel spread in the area of [ɹ ~ ʊ].

3.2 Evidence from the 17th-Century Massachusetts Town Records

What, then, is the evidence that the subclasses of *Lot*, *Goat* or even *Goose* words may have been pronounced with this raised, short [ɹ] or [ɹ̥] realizations? Orbeck is the first to provide concrete evidence for the existence of *Lot* words being pronounced with raised back vowel. More specifically, he suggests long high-mid [ɔ:] or high [u:] which concords nicely with Dobson's 16th- and 17th-century evidence for ME long /ɔ:/ (cf. below). I believe that this is, as is often the case when dealing with dialectal minutia, just the "tip of the iceberg" as Milroy (1982, 47) put it.

Very significantly, Orbeck very literally attests the existence of a raised “Lot” vowel which is spelt *loott* (Dedham, 1679; Groton, 1682; Plymouth, 1686). Considering the <tt> spelling, one can assume that the <oo> here is short, hence [ɫɹ̥]. Reinforcement for this hypothesis comes from a surprisingly modern source. In his *Dialects of England*, Trudgill (1990, 52) transcribes the pronunciation of northern English “butt” [bʊt] for *boot*, which he also spells with <tt>, as opposed to southern English “but” [bʌt]. The logic behind his doubled <tt> is essentially identical to that of the 17th-century Plymouth clerk! For reasons explained previously, [ɫ] may have had a slightly lower [ɫ̞] allophone.

Whitehall (1935, 194-199) presents a long list of vowels of this kind under the heading “Oo, ou, and u spellings not followed by a nasal,” a few of which are as follows: *buttom* “bottom,” 1759, Marblehead, Mass. (Bowen’s Diary); *coode* “cod,” Suffolk, 1530 (Kökeritz); *cullect* “collect,” 1764, Tisbury, Mass.; *Coukse* “Cox,” 1776, London; *coust* “cost,” 1574 (London);⁸ *croofte* “croft,” 1552, Essex, England; *crooke* “crock,” 1647, Plymouth, Mass.; *croos* “cross,” Sharon, 1744, Connecticut; *acrooss* “across,” 1742, Sharon, Connecticut; *goot* “got,” 1631, Plymouth; *frooste* “frost,” 1555, Suffolk (Kökeritz); *hoogs* “hogs,” 1755, Kingston, Mass.; *hoospytall* “hospital,” 1592, London; *looke* “lock,” 1724 (Massachusetts Archives); *loose* “loss,” 1796, Hartford, Connecticut (Wyllys Papers); *loot* “lot,” 1796, Hartford, Connecticut (Wyllys Papers); *rood* “rod,” 1660, Norwalk, Connecticut; *shoopes* “shops,” 1661, London... (see my New England examples of *shoope* below, i.e. Dwight’s rhyme of *shop* ~ *cup*).

Time after time, the data here concords beautifully, demonstrating that ME o had been raised and lowered to a vowel approaching [ɫ ~ ʊ].

Dobson (1968, 998) cites Cooper, who records a variant pronunciation of “hot” as *hwut* which Dobson transcribes as [hwʌt] and which Cooper describes as “barbarous.” Given that the [w] here was realized as a semi-vowel at this time, this spelling may reflect a [uə ~ uɹ̥] diphthong. We have seen that both Wilkins and Cooper shared this [ɫ̞] vowel (Mazarin, 2020) and, if so, I would assume Cooper would have preferred “hot” [hɹ̥t]. This hypothesis may be reinforced by Chaucer’s spelling of “hot” as *hoote* in his *Canterbury Tales* (1387).

Orbeck gives many other raised examples of *Lot* words. For practical purposes, I have indicated only one variable here, i.e. short [ɫ̞]: *bloock* for “block” [blɹ̥k] (Dedham, 1674). *Hooges* [hɹ̥dʒɛz] for “Hodges” (Dedham, 1660), *Roobins* [ˈɹ̥bɪnz] for “Robins” (Dedham, 1663), *roods* [ɹ̥dʒ] for “rods” (Dedham,

8 “Cost” is a borrowing from Old French *coust* (modern French *coût*). Breton also borrowed this French word and it is still pronounced *koust* [kust]. The older English pronunciation may reflect the original realization of this loanword. Likewise, OF *lot* is realized in Breton as either [lɔ:d] or [lu:d], a pronunciation which may reflect characteristics of older western French dialects. The link here with colonial English is an interesting one given that the source may be the same.

1677), *schoolar* ['skʊləɹ] for “scholar” (Dedham, 1672) (compare this with *skalerz* in Chapter 21), *shoopê* [ʃɹp] for “shop” (Dedham, 1676), *stoock* [stɹk] for “stock” (Dedham, 1673) and *stooped* [stɹpt] for “stopped” (Dedham, 1677) (Orbeck, 1927, 19). The fact that many of these words end in clusters <-tt>, <-ck>, <-ges> [-dʒz], <-binz> [-bɪnz] or unvoiced final <-p> and <-ped> [-pt] explains why I have interpreted <oo> as being short here. Note that *rod* and *shop* appear as [ɹ ~ ʃ] rhymes in the New England poems (cf. Dwight’s rhyme with *shop* ~ *cup* below).

Finally, Orbeck (1927, 40) gives a number of other *Lot* words such as *cost*, *frost*, *lost* and *cloth*, normally /ɒ/ in RP and /ɑ:/ in GA, which are spelt with either <oa> or <oo> (see Franklin’s rhymes below with these words). Orbeck also gives dual realizations involving <oo> for “losses,” “lost” and “cloth” which he interprets as having been pronounced [ɒ:] or [u:]. However, for the reasons provided above, I consider that they are most likely short.

I have found no examples in any modern variety of the raising of *Lot* words, with one exception provided in the SED for Diddlebury, Gloucestershire, for the verb “to lop” (the top branches off a tree) which is recorded as [lu:p]. Elsewhere in Gloucestershire it is pronounced [læp] and, in Worcestershire, [lap] (Orton & Barry, 1970, 452-453). Hall (1942) records “lop” as [læp] in the Smokey Mountains as well. However, the most common realization everywhere is [lɒp], as in RP.

I have not yet come across similar examples in other varieties of English, but these cases do support the probability that this high back realization of *Lot* and *Strut* words once existed in Massachusetts and, hence, by extension, in the English of southern England around the same period. Considering the widespread occurrence of rhymes pairing these *Lot* words with other lexical sets involving back vowels, the idea of eye rhymes seems out of the question here. These attestations provide plausible evidence that *Lot-Strut* rhymes were indeed possible in 18th-century New England and that Franklin shared these pronunciations. Nevertheless, the number of *Lot* words was limited.

For Tangier Island, in the Chesapeake Bay, Shores (2000, 182-83) points out that *Paul*, *ball*, *fall*, but also *call*, *gall*, *Baltimore*, *somersault*, *squall*, *gulf*, *golf*, *wolf*, *salt* “are all pronounced with the vowel of ‘bull’” which he transcribes as long [u:]. Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (1997) report the same pronunciation for the Outer Banks of North Carolina showing a similar merger of [ɒ: ~ ɑ:] > [u:], in this case before <l(l)>. Considering that these are both thought to be “relic” areas, these pronunciations could very well reflect traces of a formerly widespread dialectal feature that may have once been common in both the northern and southern colonies.

3.3 Lot-Strut Rhymes

The first type of rhyme-type we shall examine concerns the *Lot-Strut* words. For instance, as noted above, Dwight rhymes *shop* and *cup* in his *Greenfield Hill* poem. The first question is, once again, whether this is simply an imperfect rhyme, as it would first appear. I have argued repeatedly that, while approximate rhymes are a possibility, the poets clearly preferred perfect or near-perfect rhymes. Whitehall's *shoope* (London 1661) and Orbeck's example of *shoopê* [ʃɹp ~ ʃɹp] for "shop" (Dedham, 1676) are clear indicators that the rhyme with "cup" is a perfect one, the vowels of both words being realized as [ʊ ~ ɹ]:

The loudest prater, in a blacksmith's *shop*;
The wisest statesman, o'er a drunken *cup*;

Franklin gives only one example that seems to demonstrate that he too shared this [ɹ] pronunciation in these contexts. When he was only thirty-one years of age, he rhymes *cut* ~ *put* in a poem published in his *Poor Richard's Almanack*, clearly showing that his *cut* words were realized as [ɹ ~ ʊ].

Sugar twice-fin'd, in pieces *cut*,
Knife, Sieve and Glass, in order *put*. (1737)

Recall that "cut" alongside "blood" are key words in Wells' diachronic description of older [kɹt] and [blɹd] preceding their lowering to [kʌt] and [blʌd] (Wells, 1988, 199). We have seen that in places like Norfolk and the East and West Midlands, the *Strut-Foot* split did not occur, nor has it yet occurred in northern England where *blood* and *cut* are generally rendered /ʊ/. I have argued that it had not been centralized in New England during Franklin's lifetime. As we have seen for Norfolk (Orton & Tilling, 1970 above), such variables were often merely allophones. The most probable conclusion for this rhyme is that the realization of both words was close to [kɹt] ~ [pɹt]. This rhyme would also be acceptable, and perhaps passed unnoticed, in large parts of the north of England today. Note that Burton (2010, 60) points out that William Barnes pronounced *put* as [pʌt], hence a possible rhyme with [kʌt] in 19th-century Dorset.

Franklin also pairs *wont* with *blunt*, which would give [wʌ:nt] ~ [blʌnt] in GA today.

Thus like the Whetstone, many Men are *wont*
To sharpen others while themselves are *blunt*. (1734)

We have seen examples from Norfolk where words like *jump* and *stump* are pronounced with [ɹ]. We saw that Lowell (1848) spells "won't" and "wont" *wunt* which also suggests [ɹ ~ ɹ]. Once again, in all likelihood, Franklin's New England pronunciation of both words was [wɹnt] and [blɹnt] beside possible

variants of [wunt] ~ [blunt].

I shall argue that the fact that Franklin never doubles his <o> or <u> character in his RMS, or never adds a circumflex accent <ô> or <û>, to indicate they are long, may result from the fact that he had difficulty judging the vowel length of these sounds. In Chapters 25 and 26, we will look more closely at such questions. Of course, we are dealing with hypotheticals here, but the image seems a little more focused now thanks to Orbeck's and the New England poets' evidence. In other words, Franklin may have merely assumed that all <o> vowels were short. The same goes for <u> vowels. His [v: ~ a:] vowel, which I assume was long on account of the doubling of the vowel, was spelt *aa* [v(:) ~ a(:)] and even *aaaal* [v:l ~ a:l] for the word "all" in his RMS.

I have already stated that the only supporting evidence attesting to the possible existence of a popular [ʁ ~ ʁ̃] pronunciation of *Lot* words in the 19th-century vernacular that I have found to date is Lowell's spellings of *gut* (27 examples) for "got," *forhut* for "forgot," *wunt* for "won't," *wut* for "what," *nut* for "not" (e.g. *nut ez ever I heerd on*, that is, "not as I have ever heard"). The SED notes [nʁt] for "not" in Norfolk, while others pronounced it [nʌt] or [nɒt] (Orton & Tilling, 1971, 1305). I have signalled Franklin's rhymes of *what* ~ *that* but also *what* ~ *not*, suggesting that he alternated between [æ ~ a] and, if we accept the interpretation of Lowell's spellings, possibly [ʁ ~ ʁ̃] variants. Nevertheless, we shall see that in his RMS, he records all *Lot* words with [v(:) ~ a(:)], implying, once again, that his linguistic reference was polite London English of the time.

3.4 *Lot-Goat* Rhymes

With regard to Franklin's *Lot-Goat* rhymes, another striking observation is that he systematically neutralizes the values of words which are now pronounced with GA /ɑ:/ and /ou/. For a corpus of only 3,000 lines, the list of these examples is quite consequential and suggests that the merger of a subclass of *Lot* and *Goat* words was part and parcel of Franklin's natural idiom.

Be temperate in wine, in eating, girls, and *sloth*;
Or the Gout will seize you and plague you *both*. (1734)

'Tis drawn, and, to augment the *Cost*,
In dull Prolixity *engrost*: (1740)
'Tis but a Folly to rejoice, or *boast*,
How small a Price thy well-bought Purchase *cost*. (1743)

Stern Famine guards the solitary *Coast*,
And Winter barricades the Realms of *Frost*; (1750)

Long from the World conceal'd, in Error *lost*,
Whose rich Recovery latest Times shall *boast*. (1756)

Explore, for such it is, this high *Abode*,
And tread the Paths which Boyle and Newton *trod* ... (1750)

We have seen previously that the vowels of *frost*, *lost*, *trod*, *rod*, etc. are identified elsewhere with [ʊ ~ ʊ̯]. Franklin's contemporary, Alexander Pope, also rhymes words that now have GA /ou/ ~ /ɑ:/ . For instance, in his "Rape of the Lock" he matches *toast* ~ *lost* and, like Franklin, *boast* ~ *lost* as well as *showed* ~ *trod*. Can this be a simple coincidence? Was the vowel closer to modern /ɒ(:)/ or /ɔ(:)/ [ʊ̯] in these last examples?

Once again, Orbeck's data for 17th-century Massachusetts provides insight showing the same kind of confusion between, and/or fusion of, these pronunciations. He acknowledges the difficulty of interpreting the quality of the back vowels writing that, in comparison with front vowels which are "on the whole... more clearly represented, and therefore more easily interpreted," back vowels are thus more difficult to analyze "because of the conventional symbols for the back sounds overlap more" (Orbeck, 1927, 16). This echoes Wells' (2005) remarks about American mid-low and low back vowels which he claims are especially difficult to classify as well as the discussion in Chapter 21 (see the section on Principles and Obstacles).

The New England poets' rhymes of *Goat* and *Lot* words, originate from ME /ɔ:/ and the raising and lengthening of ME /ɔ/ that was typical of 16th- and 17th-century English varieties with a possible source in 14th century London-area English (cf. Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, 1387). With regard to the <oa> and <oo> spellings in the town registers, Orbeck asserts that "there is no difficulty in assuming a tense [o]" for both spellings. He then asserts that "words like *home* and *note* were pronounced in the language of the records more or less as they are at the present time, that is, with a long tense o" (Orbeck, 1927, 43). By a long tense [o], I understand a vowel in the vicinity of [ɔ:]. Given the modern evidence accrued here, we are faced with a complex scenario of competing forms.

Let us focus first on the <oo> spellings provided by the Massachusetts town records but which I interpret to be short [ʊ̯].

Hence *booth* for "both" (Watertown, 1672), *lood* for "load" (Groton, 1693), *loods* for "loads" (Watertown, 1673), *rood* for "road" (Groton, 1670), *rooad(e)* for "road" (Dedham, 1693), *hooome* for "home" for "home" (Dedham, 1678).

The following analysis of <oo> and <u> corresponding to [ʊ ~ ʊ̯] seems reinforced by examples such as *booth* for "both" (Watertown, 1672), *lood* for "load" (Groton 1693), *loods* for "loads" (Watertown 1673), *stoone* for stone (rather than *stun*) (Plymouth 1687), *stoone* for stone (rather than *stun*) (Plymouth, 1687), *roope* for "rope" (Dedham, 1679), *rood* for "road" (Groton, 1670) and diphthongized *rooad(e)* [ɹæd] for "road" (Dedham, 1693), *hooome* "home" (Dedham, 1678), next to *hoame* (Plymouth, 1644), *choose* for "chose" (Dedham, 1661)... and *cloose* for "close" (Watertown, 1676), *noote* "note" (Watertown, 1673)

(Orbeck, 1927, 44) (cf. Whitehall's examples above) are all regularly described as having short New England o, i.e. [ɹ ~ ʏ].

Note too that Orbeck (1927, 44) comments that the <u> spelling of *chussen* (Groton, 1669), *chusen* (Groton, 1670) for "chosen" (note *choose* for "chose," Dedham, 1661 above) is "rather difficult" to explain. In this particular case, Orbeck acknowledges the possibility that the <u> could represent a short vowel. This is precisely what I think is the case for both <u> and <oo> in these contexts, both being realized as [ɹ] or close variants of it (cf. Chapters 20 and 21). This interpretation is given even greater weight when one encounters spellings such as *whoole* for "whole" (Dedham, 1660) and *houslum* for "wholesome" (Watertown, 1670) among these examples (Orbeck, 1927, 45). These too have been systematically associated with [ʊ ~ ɹ ~ ʏ] by observers since the 18th to 20th centuries.

Orthographic <u>, corresponding to [ɹ], is further reinforced by the following examples which are also commonly rhymed with *God*, namely, *flud* "flood" (Dedham, 1678), *fluds* for "floods" (Dedham, 1705), *blud* for "blood" (Groton, 1665)! This <u> is also given for *luck* "look" (Groton, 1704), *bruck* "brook" (Groton, 1705), *buck* "book" (Groton, 1682), *tuck* for "took" (Plymouth, 1693), *understud* "understood" (Dedham, 1697). Once again, this <u> appears to reflect a shortened, slightly centralized [ɹ ~ ʊ] (but probably not the long [u:] vowel imagined by Orbeck, 1927, 46).

Therefore, to repeat, *look* "look" (Dedham, 1689), *broock* (Groton, 1682) (both with final <ck> suggests a short [ɹ] vowel. *Wooman* (Watertown, 1675) most likely represent [ɹ] here, i.e., [ʊ(:)mæn] with vowel assimilation or [ɹmæn], while *boolet* "bullet" (Watertown, 1654) could be long [u:] before [l] or simply [ʊ ~ ɹ].

Finally, among this list of New England examples is *dun* "done" (Watertown, 1673; Groton, 1704), *doon* for "done" (Groton, 1682), *dooth* for "doth" (Watertown, 1651) and *abooove* for "above" (Watertown, 1679) corresponds once again to words that are rhymed with *Foot* words by the New Englanders. Having said this, Orbeck (1927, 46) sees a long [u:] here where, considering the evidence examined previously, short [ɹ] or [ʊ] or even [ɔ] are more probable.

Based on the data examined so far, Orbeck's evidence appears to concord well with that observed in the poetic sources cited above and in the preceding chapters. I would simply add that the evidence seems to show that, whatever their precise quality may have been, oscillation between short and long variants may have been in play. For the reasons discussed previously, when seen from a very broad geolinguistic and sociolinguistic perspective, these colonial <oo> and <u> spellings appear to have had the following phonetic range: [ʊ ~ ɹ ~ ɔ]. With regard to the <oa> spellings, in the broadest terms, I would lean in favour of [ɔ ~ ʏ], but this distinction between orthographic <oa> and <oo> may be illusory

with the clerks simply struggling to find a spelling to represent this obscure [ɾ ~ ʔ]/[ɔ ~ ɔʔ] sounds.

We have seen above that Orbeck (1927, 19) gives the following examples, many of which echo Franklin's examples above: *coast* [kɾst] for "cost" (Watertown, 1670), *froast* [fɾst] for "frost" (Dedham, 1669). Compare these to the rhymes observed in Franklin's poems.

'Tis drawn, and, to augment the *Cost*,
In dull Prolixity *engrost*: (1740)

'Tis but a Folly to rejoice, or *boast*,
How small a Price thy well-bought Purchase *cost*. (1743)

Stern Famine guards the solitary *Coast*,
And Winter barricades the Realms of *Frost*; (1750)

Long from the World conceal'd, in Error *lost*,
Whose rich Recovery latest Times shall *boast*. (1756)

Recall that Orbeck (1927, 43-46) gives dual <oa> and <oo> spellings for "lost," *loost* [lɾst ~ lʊst] for (Watertown, 1671) and *loast* [lɾst ~ lɔst] (Watertown, 1671). "Cloth" also has two realizations, *clooth* [klɾθ ~ kluθ] (see *clooth-making*, Chaucer, below) (Watertown, 1673) and *cloath* [klɾθ ~ klɔθ] (Dedham, 1669; Watertown, 1674). Finally, he also gives examples of "both" spelt as either *boath* (Groton, 1689) [bɾθ ~ bɔθ] or *booth* [bɾθ] (Watertown, 1672). Note Orton & Tilling's (1971, 937) transcriptions of "both" for Norfolk is [bɔθ] (3 localities out of 13) as well as [bɔ:θ], [bu·θ] and [bɔuθ]. Note also, Franklin's rhyme of *both* ~ *sloth* above. The question of whether there were diphthongal [ʊə ~ ɾə] variants in these words has not been addressed here.

Nevertheless, recall Avis' minimal pair of *rode-road* above, in which Avis (1971) argued that *rode* is now realized as /ou/ while *road* is pronounced /ə/ or /əə/ (his transcription) in New England. This must not always have been the case given that some <-ode> or <-ote> words must have also been realized as [ɾ ~ ʔ] for some speakers. Examples of this kind are *roope* [ɾɒp] for "rope" (Dedham, 1679), *roods* [ɾɒdz], once again, for "roads" (Groton, 1670) and *lood* [lɒd] for "load" (Groton, 1693; Watertown, 1673). Avis gives "roads" and "loads" among the words he has recorded having "short o."

As would be expected, *home* figures among Avis' key words as well as "close" (also attested in Orbeck's list and spelt *cloose* for "close" (Watertown, 1676) (Orbeck, 1927, 44). Note the list *goat, boat, coat, road, loads, toast, oats, smoke, home, stone, bone, whole, broken, close, cove, most* and *none* (Avis, 1971).

Comforting the hypothesis that <oa> and <oo> spellings of these words could simply represent the same [ɾ ~ ʔ ~ ɔ] sound, Orbeck gives examples of "home" with these two spellings: *hoame* [hɾm] (Plymouth, 1644) and *hooome* [hɾm]

(Dedham, 1678). The rest tend to be spelt <oo>: *stoone* for “stone” [stɔn ~ stʏn] (Plymouth, 1687), *stoony* [ˈstɔni ~ ˈstʏni] (Groton, 1682). “Pope’s Neck” is written *Poop’s Neck* [pɔps ~ pʏps] (Plymouth, 1701), “close” spelt *cloose* [klɔz ~ klʏz] (Watertown, 1676), “note” is spelt *noot* [nɔt ~ nʏt] (Watertown, 1673).

Although the vowels of “go” and “going” are not of the same type, they are given as *goue* [gu(:)] “go” (Groton, 1682) and *gooing* [gu(:)iŋ?] “going” (Watertown, 1677). Recall that Armfield (1893) noted the parallel between Essex and Massachusetts pronunciation of “going” with the preverbal particle <a>: *a-gooing* [əˈgu:iŋ]. Lowell (1848) gives *a-gooin* [əˈgu:ɪn]. A-prefixing was already going by the wayside in the Wycliffe Bible. Wycliffe was from Yorkshire, however, where this feature has rarely if ever been used. The King James Bible (1611) shuns the feature altogether.⁹ But this was certainly not the case in the paritary American koines, or back in southern England where this morpheme is heard. *A-goin* can still be heard in Appalachia today, although it is now recessive. I heard it quite often in Virginia during the late 1960s and 1970s. Burton (2012, 98) also gives [gu:] for 19th-century Dorset while I have recorded [gɪ:] and [ˈgɪ.ɪn] for Deane (Bolton), Lancashire (German, personal notes).

3.5 ME /ɔɪ/ > /u(:)ɪ ~ ʊ(:)ɪ/

Dobson (1968, 483) describes ME short o + /r/ as yielding not only [oəɪ] but also long ME /o:/ + /r/ as [v:ɪ]. He describes how these resulted in doublets and cites examples given by Bullokar (1580): [bɔərn] ~ [bɔ:vɪn] for *born*, [tɔərn] ~ [tɔ:vɪn] for *torn*, [kɔərd] ~ [kɔ:vɪd] *cord*, [swɔərn] or [swɔ:vɪn] for *sworn*. Likewise, *Glory* (OF *glorie*) is pronounced either [ˈglɔəɪ] or yields [ˈglɔ:vɪ] by the lengthening of short o before r (cf. [glu:ɪ] above). Other examples with either [ɔəɪ] or [v:ɪ] are *forge*, *porch*, *report*, *port sport* and *fork*. Recall that a similar class of words is cited by Grandgent (1899, 218) as being pronounced [ɔɪ] in Massachusetts (rather than [vɪ]), i.e. *porch*, *pork*, *port*, *sport*. In the RMS, Franklin generally represents <or> words to be [v(:)ɪ] as in *staarm* “storm” [stɔ(v(:)ɪ)m] and *faar* [fɔ(v(:)ɪ] “for,” etc.

In Chapter 21, I pointed out that many words spelt <ore> and <oar(C)> had been raised to [u:ɪ] by the 16th and 17th centuries. Dobson (1968, 675) quotes Hodges (1649) and Cooper (1685) as classifying “boar” and “bore” as “near alike,” which Dobson interprets to have been realized as [bu:ɪ] and [bɔ:vɪ] respectively. Hodges, a Londoner, also systematically pronounces “more” as [mu:ɪ] and both he and Cooper pronounced “sworn” as [swu:ɪn]. Like the New England town records, Cooper has *boord* for “board” [bu:ɪd] (or perhaps more likely [bɔ:vɪd]?) but also for *bor’d*, which Dobson assumes is pronounced with high-mid [bɔ:vɪd].

9 I found only one instance of a-fishing: John 21:3 *I go a fishing*, but no results for *a hunting*, *a speaking*, *a walking*, *a talking*, *a working*...

These hesitations are also reflected in the New England town records and may in certain cases represent [ʁ ~ ʁ̥] as well.

Dobson's examples showing variants with [u:ɪ] demonstrate to me that there must have existed a close [ɔ:ɪ] bridge variant at some point which would have permitted the rising of <or> to [glu:ɪi] for "glory" or [swu:ɪd] for "sword." But what should we make of the fact that Dobson interprets all these words to have been long? Orbeck (1927, 41), like Dobson, also analyses words such as "board," also spelt *boord* in the Watertown records (1673) (cf. Cooper above) to have been pronounced with long [ɔ:], [bɔ:ɪd].

This supports at least part of my hypothesis about a raised [ɔ(:)ɪ] variable for <oar> words, but I would simply add that some dialect speakers may have had shortened variants of these which were realized as [bɔɪd ~ bʁɪd]. Orbeck gives "clapboard" *clapboord* ['klæp,bɔ:ɪd] (Dedham, 1640) for which the second element was almost certainly shortened to ['klæp,bʁɪd] or perhaps even [-bæɪd] or [-bəd] in rapid speech. The following examples are of the same kind: "ford" as *foord* [fɔ(:)ɪd ~ fʁɪd] (Plymouth, 1651), "fordway" as *foordway* [fɔ(:)ɪd,wei ~ 'fʁɪd,wei ~ 'fʁɪd,wæi] (Groton, 1672), "score" as *scoore* [skɔ(:)ɪ ~ skʁɪ] (Plymouth, 1701) and finally, "doors" as *dooers* [dɔ(:)əɪz ~ duəɪz] (Dedham, 1674). I have recorded [duə(ɪ)] in Deane, Lancashire. Once again, of course, the precise quality of the vowel is uncertain and may have ranged between [ɔ(:)ɪ ~ u(:)ɪ ~ uɪ ~ ʁɪ]. Dialect speakers from other regions may have had a lower back realization in the vicinity of [ɒ(:)ɪ ~ ɔ(:)ɪ].

To summarize, Orbeck interprets most of the <u>, <oa> and <oo> spellings to be either [u(:)] or [ɔ:], whereas I view them as also being shortened and slightly fronted versions of these. His [ɔ(:)] is in fact very close to short [ʁ] which seems to be the most likely common denominator here.

These examples show the impressive volatility of a system that was in constant flux during the first one hundred years of settlement. On account of the interplay and inevitable code-switching between the paritary and disparitary koines, this instability (at all levels of language) dominated until the comparatively recent imposition of universal education in America. Indeed, obligatory *public* school laws were not passed until well after the second half of the 19th century, with Massachusetts being the first to pass such a law in 1852 and Mississippi being the last in 1917. This is one reason that explains why the older pronunciations and grammatical features have been better preserved in rural areas of the American South. Recall that the Puritans passed a law in 1642 requiring all people, whether male or female, freemen or servants, to learn to read scripture.

A simple look at Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* reveals many examples of this type, indicating that the phenomenon was already well underway in London (1387-1400) and that <oo> spellings, probably [ɔ(:) ~ u(:)], were already current in a wide range of word types in his day:

ME short o /ɔ/ Lot words GA /ɑ:/	<i>hoote</i> “hot,” <i>clooth</i> “cloth,” <i>brood</i> “broad”
ME short o /ɔ/ Strut words GA /ʌ/	<i>oon</i> “one,” <i>noon</i> “none,” <i>oother</i> “other,” <i>soong</i> “sung”
ME long o /ɔ:/ Goat words GA /ou:/	- <i>goot</i> “goat,” <i>ooth</i> “oath,” <i>looth</i> “loath,” <i>brooch</i> “broach”... <i>hoom</i> “home,” <i>hoole</i> “whole,” <i>stoon</i> “stone,” <i>hooly</i> “holy,” <i>rood</i> - “rode,” <i>moore</i> “more,” <i>everemoore</i> “evermore,” <i>loore</i> “lore,” <i>stoor</i> “store,” <i>soore</i> “sore”... - <i>boold</i> “bold,” <i>coold</i> “cold,” <i>hoost</i> “host,” <i>moost</i> “most,” <i>wrooth</i> “wroth,” <i>goon</i> “to go,” <i>noon</i> “none,” <i>roote</i> “rote,” <i>hoomly</i> “homely,” <i>coote</i> “coat,” <i>doon</i> “to do,” <i>doomes</i> “judgements,” <i>rooste</i> “roast,” <i>hood</i> “hood,” <i>good</i> “good”... *New England key words have been highlighted

4. Focused Examples

We cannot possibly examine every occurrence or characteristic of this kind, nor is it the objective of this chapter. For the sake of convenience, I have classed the examples of rhymes involving short o by Dwight, Barlow, Franklin and Lowell into three broad categories:

- [ɾ ~ ʔ] before nasals: [m], [n], [ŋ];
- [ɾ ~ ʔ] before voiced labiodental fricative [v];
- [ɾ ~ ʔ] before voiced apico-alveolar stop [d].

The purpose is to present the evidence discussed above from another perspective.

4.1 <ome>, <oom>, <omb>, <oam>: [ʔm]

A little more than a decade before the birth of Franklin’s father and uncle in Northamptonshire, Hodges (1644), also a Northamptonshire man, transcribed the Lord’s prayer which Mazarin (2020, 6) interprets as follows (cf. Chapter 20):

/aʊr fæ:ðer hwɪtʃ ært ɪn he:vɪn, hælə:ed bi: ðei næ:m. ðei kɪŋdɪm kɪm, ðei wɪl bi: dʊn ɪn ɛrθ æz ɪt ɪz ɪn he:vɪn. gɪv ʃs ðɪs dæi aʊr dæɪlɪ bɹed, ænd fɑrgɪv ʃs aʊr trespæsez, æz wɪ: fɑrgɪv ðem ðæt trespæs ægæɪnst ʃs. ænd le:d ʃs nat mtu: temtæ:ʃan, bʁt de:lɪvɪv ʃs frɑm ɪvl/.

Note that *kɪŋdɪm* “kingdom,” *kɪm* “come,” *ʃs* “us” and *bʁt* “but” all have lowered [ɾ] (ME /o/ & /u/).

My interpretation of Wilkins’ transcription of the Lord’s prayer is as follows (cf. Chapter 13):

//ʃu: fæðɛɪ hwɪtʃ ært ɪn he:vɪn/ hælə:ed bi ðɹi næ:m/ ðɹi kɪŋdɪm kɪm/ ðɹi uɪl bi dɹn, ɪn ɛθ æz ɪt ɪz ɪn he:vɪn/ gɪv ʃs ðɪs dæi ʃu: dæɪl bɹed/ ænd fɔ:gɪv ʃs

ˌɹuɪ ˈtɹɛspæsəz æz ui ˌfɒɹˈɡiv ðəm ðæt ˈtɹɛspæs əˈɡæɪnst ɹs/ ænd ˈlɛːd ɹs ˈnɒt ɪntu ˌtɛmpˈtasiən / **bɹt** dɛˈlɪvɪɹ ɹs frəm ˈɪvɪl/ ˌfɒɹ ˈðɹɪn ɪz ðɛ ˈkɪŋdɹm/ ˌðɛ ˈpɹuɛɪ ænd ˌðɛ ˈɡlɒɪ/ ˌfɒɹ ˈɛvɪɹ ænd ˈɛvɪɹ æˈmɛn//. (Wilkins, 1668, 373)

In this transcription, we see perfect harmony between the high front and back onset vowels of the corresponding diphthongs [ɹɪ] and [ɹu] rather than the structurally lopsided system adopted in Franklin's RMS, namely, **ɹi** /ɪ/ (Franklin's [əɪ ~ ɹɪ]) and **ɑu** [ʊ ~ ɑu]. For reasons to be presented in Part IV, I suspect that Franklin idiolect was either [əɪ] ~ [əu] or [ɹɪ] vs [ɹu]. This may explain his hesitation between [ɹɪ] and [əɪ ~ ɪ] in his 1768 manuscript version of his vowel and consonant table.

Compare this to Mazarin's interpretation of Lodwick's transcription of the Lord's Prayer (Lodwick, 1686):

/ɔʊr fæðer hwɪtʃ ært ɪn hevn, haloːʔed [sic] bi ðɛi nɛːm. ðɛi kɪŋdɹm kɹm, ðɛi wɪl bi dɹn ɪn **ɹɹθ** æz ɪt ɪz ɪn hevn. gɪv ɹs ðɪs dɛː ɔʊr dɛːlɛɪ bred, ænd **ɹɹ**gɪv ɹs ɔʊr tɹɛspæsez, æz wɪ **ɹɹ**gɪv ðəm ðæt tɹɛspæs æɡɛːnst ɹs. æn

d lɛːd ɹs **nɹt** ɪntu **tɛmtɛːɹn**, **bɹt** dɛːlɪvɪɹ ɹs frəm ɪvɪl/.

Here, key words such as *come*, *done*, *kingdom* as well as *forgive*, *not*, *us* and *but* would be realized by both men as [ɹ]. Given the time frame, and taking colonial lag into consideration, it is quite natural that this [ɹ] pronunciation could have lingered on in Massachusetts throughout the 18th century and that seems to have been the case.

As pointed out by Grandgent, Krapp, Dobson, Avis and Trudgill, a particularly salient word in which short o is regularly heard is *home*. For the reasons expressed above, I found no evidence of a diphthongal [ʊə ~ əə] pronunciation in any of the New England rhymes. If they are present, it simply means that they have been masked by traditional orthography. In his *Greenfield Hill*, Dwight rhymes *home* ~ *roam* on at least ten different occasions, suggesting that *roam* was also pronounced with the short New England o, described by Grandgent as [ɹ]. Franklin too rhymes these two words:

Don't after foreign Food and Cloathing *roam*,
But learn to eat and wear what's rais'd at *Home*. (1748)

Note too that this short o feature, whatever its precise realization, dates at least to the 16th century because Shakespeare (from Warwickshire) also rhymed words such as *roaming* ~ *coming* (Dobson, 1968, 680) exactly as the New Englanders were still doing 200 years later, as can be seen in these couplets by Franklin.

Ben beats his Pate, and fancys wit will *come*;
But he may knock, there's no body at *home*. (1742)

And brings it to enlarge her Heap at *Home*,

Against the Winter, which she knows will *come*. (1756)

Dwight rhymes *home* ~ *come* seven times and *home* ~ *tomb* twice, which recalls Trudgill's *comb*, pronounced [kum] in Norfolk (Trudgill, 2016). Dobson (1968, 676) cites Fox and Hookes (circa 1670) as pronouncing *comb* [ku:m], so [kum ~ kum] can easily be explained here as a shortened version of the older [ɔ:] raised to [u:], discussed in Chapter 21 (cf. ME /ɔ:/).

Dobson also records *womb* as having formerly been pronounced [u:] by Hodges and others (ibid., 677), as it is today. It too was apparently reduced to [wum ~ wum] and, for this reason, Dwight's *tomb* and Franklin's *womb* were probably pronounced [tʁm] and [wʁm] respectively. Historically, the passage to [ʁ] here may have been via [tum] and [wum]. Recall also that Dwight was from Northampton, Massachusetts.

Reinforcing what has already been seen, Dobson (676, note 3) points out that *home* is still pronounced with [u:] in a number of dialects including Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Hertfordshire... which, again, is where many of the New England Puritans were originally from. I have argued that the 18th-century New England pronunciation of *home* was shortened as follows: ME /ɔ:/ > [u:] > [u ~ ʊ] > [ɔ ~ ʁ ~ ʁ]. It is interesting that Dobson notes that Coles' rhyme of *home* ~ *whom* shows variation between [ɔ:] and "some other vowel, probably [u:]" (Dobson, 1968, 677). Given that the example is "home," this "some other vowel" could well have been short [ʁ ~ ʁ].

Dwight rhymes *home* ~ *dome* as well as in strings of words such as *bloom* ~ *doom* ~ *dome* ~ *home* and, in another case, in *home* ~ *room* ~ *dome* ~ *bloom*. Here two things are clear. *Dome* and *home* could not be pronounced with [ɔ:], nor could *bloom* and *doom* be pronounced [u:] as one might expect today in GA or RP. For the vowels to rhyme as Dwight presents them, the vowels in *home*, *dome*, *bloom*, *doom* and *room* would all need to have been realized in the vicinity of [ʊ ~ ʁ ~ ʁ]. If so, it is understandable that naïve spellers might have represented this hybrid sound in many of these words with orthographic <u> or <oo>. What other choice did they have?

Reinforcing Trudgill's analysis for Norfolk, Wells (1989, 338) writes, "Certain *Goose* words, too, may sporadically appear with /ʊ/, especially in Suffolk, thus *bloom* [blum], *tooth* [tʊθ]." Recall Krapp's long list of examples of [ʊ] pronunciations for New England, cited in the last chapter (< ME /ɔ:/): *aloof*, *boot*, *coop*, *Cooper*, *food*, *groom*, *hoof*, *hoop*, *Hooper*, *nook*, *proof*, *rood*, *roof*, *rook*, *rooster*, *root*, *soon*, *soot*, *spook*, *woof* (1925, 149). Grandgent adds *soon* to the list, and I concluded that Franklin also pronounced *moon* as [ʁ] (rhyming it with "sun" [sʁn]). There were clearly many more shortened <oo> words with [ʁ ~ ʊ] allophones in large areas of southern England.

For instance, in his *Columbiad*, Barlow, who was a Connecticut man, also rhymes *home* ~ *doom*, *home* ~ *gloom*, *home* ~ *tomb*, *home* ~ *dome* as well as

home ~ *Rome*, *home* ~ *roam* and *home* ~ *come* which implies that they were all pronounced [ɜ ~ ʏ] here. Given that he was from Connecticut, [ʊ] may not be impossible here. Other rhymes include *doom* ~ *tomb*, *doom* ~ *womb*, *doom* ~ *bloom*, *doom* ~ *dome* and *doom* ~ *o'ercome* and *bloom* ~ *room*.

New England *tomb* and *womb* were evidently also pronounced with this shortened “o-like” [ɜ ~ ʏ] vowel. Grandgent (cf. above) cited *room* and *roof* as words with short <u> (i.e. [ɜ ~ ʊ]). If they are perfect rhymes, and I believe they are, this would imply that *come* ~ *roam*, *dome* ~ *doom*, etc. were also pronounced in a similar manner.

Like his fellow New England poets, Franklin also rhymes *home* ~ *come* (three times), *home* ~ *roam* (we have already seen that *roam* was pronounced with this [ɜ ~ ʏ] vowel). Dobson (1968, 679) observes that the normal 16th- and 17th-century pronunciation of *Rome* was [ru:m] and that *Rome* ~ *roam* were formerly included in “near alike lists” (possibly because *roam* was shortened to [ʊ ~ ɜ ~ ʏ]). We have seen that Webster (1789, 105) also confirmed that, for New Englanders of all classes, *Rome* and *room*, were realized with [u:].

However, Franklin also rhymes *Rome* with a range of words we have previously analyzed as having short [ɜ ~ ʏ]: *Rome* ~ *home* (1748), *Rome* ~ *doom* (1752), *Rome* ~ *womb* (1757).

When great Augustus rul'd the World and *Rome*,
The Cloth he wore was spun and wove at *Home*, (1748)

The *Press* from her fecundous *Womb*
Brought forth the Arts of Greece and *Rome*; (1757)

Franklin and Barlow both rhyme *home* ~ *roam* and *home* ~ *Rome*, which argues in favour of a shortened [u:] > [ʊ ~ ɜ ~ ʏ] in New England where *Rome* and *roam* were homophones.

One must thus consider that these poets may have been juggling with long and short variants of these words in their rhymes, as the case may be. Alexander Pope, for instance, rhymes *foredoom* ~ *Rome* but *doom* ~ *come* in his “The Rape of the Lock.” Given that he too rhymes *doom* with *come*, one would expect the realization of both *foredoom* and *Rome* to also be with a similar short vowel [ʊ ~ ɜ] or perhaps [ɔ].

Likewise, Franklin’s multiple rhymes of <oo> words with “come” suggests the same kind of shortening, in his case [ɜ ~ ʏ]: *come* ~ *gloom* (1750 & 1756), *doom* ~ *bloom* (1750), *doom* ~ *loom* (1752), *doom* ~ *Rome* (1752), *come* ~ *doom* (1757), *come* ~ *bloom* (1739) and as seen above, *come* ~ *home*. This accumulation of evidence reinforces the hypothesis that *come* and other words in this class had not yet been fully centralized by Franklin (see his *moon* ~ *sun* rhyme below) and that the vowel was short.

Herrick, in his poem, “Corinna’s Going a-Maying” (1648), also pairs *come* with

home, exactly as Franklin and the other New Englanders. It is thus inconceivable to me that these English and New England examples are not part of a shared linguistic tradition.

Even if Grandgent states that neither he nor Lowell had heard [ʌ] in these contexts in Massachusetts, I find it difficult to imagine that the Connecticut poets pronounced *doom*, *gloom*, or *bloom* with [ʌ] as well (*gloom* vs *glum*?). For the reasons expressed above, neither do I think that we are dealing with eye rhymes here. Note also that Franklin rhymes words such as *tomb* and *doom* with <ume> words, *consume* and *resume*.

Treasure no Moth can touch, no Rust *consume*;
Safe from the Knave, the Robber, and the *Tomb*. (1749)

Pain'd for its Choice, would still its Choice *resume*,
Which (by sure Want) but more augments the *Doom*, (1756)

Wright (1905, 488) gives only one example of “home” pronounced [hum] for Northumberland but, interestingly, “home” is quite frequently pronounced [u] or [ɒ] in the North and West Midlands when following initial [w-]. For instance, Lancashire [wɒm ~ wum] “home,” Cheshire [wɒm], Derby, Staffordshire [wum ~ wɒm], Warwickshire, Worcestershire [wɒm]. This [u] pronunciation corresponds to my own observations in Deane, Lancs., cited above where I noted [wum ~ wɒm]. These words have been affected by h-loss and are occasionally recorded in the New England records as *hwome*. It also demonstrates that Trudgill’s examples for *home* with [u] are not isolated. Note that for Somerset, Alicia Leith (1895, 65) appears to retain the older [u:] pronunciation in “come,” spelt *coom* [ku(:)m] and *coomed* [ku(:)md] “comed” (i.e. regularized preterit for “came”).

In Chapter 14 (cf. Chapters 25 and 26), I pointed out the striking resemblance between Wilkins’ and Franklin’s choice of the symbol <u> to express what must manifestly have been the same or a similar sound. This <u> was one of Franklin’s six new characters he designed for his RMS. The question is whether Franklin interpreted its value in the same way as Wilkins. Mazarin (2020, 6) considers that Wilkins’ realization of this vowel was indeed [ɤ].

Considering that the *Strut-Foot* split had not yet occurred in the Midlands, parts of East Anglia and the North in 17th- and 18th-century England (or to the present day), it is thus probable that the value of the latter could have been close to [ɤ] in all these positions at this time. Recall that Wilkins transcribes traditional orthographic <o> and <u> with his simple **u** character; hence my transcription of “son,” “suffered,” “buried,” “come” and “judge” in his Apostles’ Creed, all realized as [ɤ].

I have argued that this was also Franklin’s *natural* pronunciation of these vowels throughout his life, even while in England. This kind of detail explains why he needed Polly Stevenson’s assistance in creating his RMS model (cf.

Chapter 25). We have already seen that the hypothesis in favour of [ʏ ~ ʝ] in an array of subclasses involving several lexical sets is strengthened by evidence from Franklin's poetry (cf. Chapters 15, 21 and 22).

We have seen that Mazarin also transcribes Cooper's *Price* words as [ʏi] (cf. Chapter 16) where [ʏ] appears as the onset vowel of the diphthong **yi** [ʏi] in the following words: *I, almighty, Christ, by, Pilot, right, light*. Mazarin (2020, 17). He also gives [ʏi] for Cooper's *Price* words during the 1680s (for Dobson's interpretation, cf. 1968, 255).

Wilkins uses his **y** character as the first element of the *Mouth* diphthong in *our* (hence [ʏuɪ]), as opposed to Franklin's *aaur* in RMS (cf. Hodges [ʊuɪ]). He also has it preceding /r/ in *third* and *church*. Finally, we find Wilkins used it in unstressed final position in *Jesus, Pontius* and *resurrection* (Chapter 14). In this last case, how are we to interpret these examples? Literally as [ʏ], or as reduced [ə]?

Nevertheless, Franklin does not seem to have attributed this [ʏ ~ ʝ] value to his own **y** character of his RMS which I have represented as phonemic London /ʌ/. I initially assumed he was reproducing London [ʌ] in all these cases, but now I am not so certain. As mentioned previously, Franklin transcribes "come" in his reformed alphabet as **kym** [kʏm] /kʊm/ vs RMS /kʌm/ and "done" as **dyn** [dʏn ~ dʊn] vs RMS /dʌn/... Again, I believe he (and Barlow and Dwight) probably realized these words in their natural speech with a vowel close to [ʏ ~ ʝ]. Franklin clearly distinguishes between his **u**, **o** and **y** characters: **so** [sʊ] "so," **sym** [sʏm] vs RMS /sʌm/, "some," **sun** [sʊn ~ su:n?] "soon," **rod** [ʀʊd ~ ʀʊ:d?] "road," **rut** [ʀʊt ~ ʀu:t] "root," **ryn** [ʀʏn] vs RMS /ʀʌn/ "run." Recall, however, that Grandgent states that *soon* is pronounced with a short **u** which I have interpreted as [ʊ ~ ʏ] in his idiolect. To repeat, Franklin's u and o characters are never indicated as being long and this may be an indication that he may have had difficulty determining whether his own pronunciation of these vowels was long or short. Of all the words cited in this paragraph, only **so** has not been recorded in New England as not having [ʊ ~ ʏ ~ ʝ].

4.2 <-one>, <-un>, <-on>, <-own>, <-oan>: [ʏn]

Throne is a key word in New England English which is regularly matched with [ʏ ~ ʝ]. This conforms with Dobson's analysis that ME *ō* [ɔ: ~ ɒ:] raised to [ʊ: ~ u:] and was then lowered and shortened to [ʊ ~ ʏ]. This seems to be confirmed by Swrdwal's "Hymn to the Virgin," *God mat trwn*, "God-made throne," which the author writes in Welsh orthography [gʊd mat 'tru(:)n] (with Welsh provection [-d + t-] > [tt]) (German, 2000, 2001, 2007). The evolution of this word would appear to be [θʊu:n] > [θʊʊn] > [θʏʏn] ~ [θʀʀn]. This word was probably borrowed from OF as *trone* [trɔn]. The English pronunciation suggests a short, raised pronunciation of ME *o*. The Welsh rendition of it reflects the English pronunciation at the time

of borrowing in the same way as *ffrind* [frɪnd] “friend,” *wdcneif* ['udknɛif ~ 'udknəif] “wood-knife.”

Barlow makes abundant use of rhymes with *throne* and all of the categories of words indicated in the heading in which he rhymes *throne* ~ *sun* (11 times), *throne* ~ *son* (4 times), *throne* ~ *stone*, *throne* ~ *shone* (4 times), but also *throne* ~ *zone*, *throne* ~ *alone* (twice), *throne* ~ *groan*, *throne* ~ *oe'rstown*, *throne* ~ *unknown*, *throne* ~ *own* (6 times)... all presumably with [ʁ ~ ʁ]. We have seen that *shone*, *zone*, *alone*, *own* are all rhymes with [ʁ ~ ʁ] words. Being a Connecticut man, it is not impossible that he may already have pronounced these with [ʌ] but, as I have stated above, [ʊ] may have been a possible variant.

The rhymes in Dwight's *Greenfield Hill*, are more convincing: *throne* ~ *undone*, *throne* ~ *one*, *thrones* ~ *sons* as well as *alone* ~ *done*, *alone* ~ *sun*, *alone* ~ *run*, *alone* ~ *won*, *alone* ~ *on* and *alone* ~ *zone*, *done* ~ *on*, *undone* ~ *one*, *undone* ~ *own*, again, all with [ʁ ~ ʁ]. This evidence provides more proof that “alone” was truly pronounced with a short [ʊ ~ ʁ ~ ʌ?]. Orbeck (1927, 46) gives “done” with numerous spellings ranging from *don* [dɒn ~ dɒn?] (Groton, 1682), *dun* [dʌn ~ dʌn] (Watertown, 1673), *doon* [du(:)n ~ dʌn] (Groton, 1682), *doone* [du(:)n ~ dʌn] (Watertown, 1651).

Dwight provides other examples such as *own* ~ *sun*, *sun* ~ *shone* and *shone* ~ *gone* and, finally, *gone* ~ *own* ~ *known*. Similarly, Barlow matches *stone* ~ *shun*, *smoke* ~ *took*. Dobson (1968, 676) gives *smoke* [smu:k] as a common 16th-century pronunciation and cites J. Smith (1674) has having pronounced it [smɔ:k]. There were obviously shortened variants of these.

We have already seen how Franklin opposed *sloth* ~ *both*, *cost* ~ *boast*, *coast* ~ *frost*, that is, GA [ou] ~ [ɑ: ~ ɒ:]. In his *Reformed Mode of Spelling* (1768/79), Franklin describes the pronunciation of *John*, *folly*, *ball*, *awl* as having a sound near [ɒ(:) ~ ɑ(:)] which I believe reflects the London model he was trying to highlight rather than his own Boston accent. Following his own description of these words, I believe they would have been transcribed and pronounced in his RMS as follows: *dʃaʌn* [dʒɒn], *faʌli* ['fɒli] and *baʌl* [bɒ:l], *aaʌl* [ɒ:l] (note that he doubles the fused *aa* in this last word [ɒ:l ~ ɑ:l]).

In his RMS, he clearly indicates *dʃaʌn* as [dʒɒ(:)n] and “done” as *dʌn* as [dʌn] (vs RMS /dʌn/) and there was thus no confusing the two. However, Franklin's rhyme of *John*, *own* and *done* below obviously contradicts the RMS evidence (cf. Chapter 26). The rhyme would suggest a shared realization of the vowel. This is another indication that two separate phonological systems are confronted here, reflecting his Massachusetts koine, perhaps with Philadelphian input, and his RMS being inspired by what he interpreted to be the accent of cultivated London speakers.

But I have mistaken the Case, Sir, says *John*,
The dead Bull I talk of, and please you, 's my *own*:

And yours is the Beast that the Mischief has *done*. (1743)

The combination is mystifying for the Modern English RP/GA speaker. Did he pronounce *John* [dʒɒn ~ dʒɑ:n] or with a shortened [dʒɹn ~ dʒɹn], “own” [ɒn ~ ɹn], and “done” [dɒn ~ dʌn ~ dɹn]? The only common denominator appears to be the short [ɹ ~ ɹ] or a close variant thereof as was the case in his *both* ~ *sloth*, *cost* ~ *boast* rhymes above...

Similarly, in his “From an Essay on Criticism,” with regard to “own,” Alexander Pope matches *none* ~ *own* which suggests a similar short [ɹ ~ ɹ]. Franklin has other rhymes matching GA /ɑ:/, /ʌ/, /ou/:

To such a height th’Expeuce of COURTS is *gone*,
That poor Men are redress’d—*till they’re undone*. (1734)

The Friend, the Father, and the Husband *gone*,
The Priest still lives in this recording *Stone*; (1755)

Thus like the Whetstone, many Men are *wont*
To sharpen others while themselves are *blunt*. (1734)

Once again, the weight of the evidence here points to a vowel close to Grandgent’s ò (= [ɹ]) vowel in all of these examples (vs Wright’s ù [ɹ?]). To repeat, we have also seen that Lowell spells “wont” as *wunt*, which reinforces this [wɹn] ~ [blɹnt] rhyme.

As stated above, diphthongized variants of some of these key words, such as *stone* [stuən], *home* [huəm] or *road* [ruəd]¹⁰ were described by both Burton for Devon and Avis for New England. As I have proposed previously, these must also have been commonly heard in the spoken vernacular in large areas of England and in the North American colonies and were, without doubt, part of the original New England feature pool. The orthographic evidence of this diphthongal realization is slight and I have already given Orbeck’s examples of *rooad* [ruəd] for “road” (Dedham, 1693; Plymouth, 1701) and *rooadway* [ruəd,wei] for “roadway” (Watertown, 1673) (Orbeck, 1927, 43).

Barnes’ diphthongal realizations of the same words in [uə] (Burton, 2010) show the ultimate source is English. Nevertheless, as I have stated elsewhere, aside from occasional naïve spellings such as these, such orthographic diphthongal realizations are rare in 18th-century New England or New York texts for the simple reason that the clerks were more formally educated and made fewer spelling “mistakes.” There is no way of telling how common the diphthong variables were. If we could tell, this would be of profound help in refining the transcriptions made throughout this study. Nevertheless, because of the uncertainty, I have not directly entered this factor into my transcriptions

¹⁰ This interpretation corresponds to Avis’ [əə].

(cf. Appendices 3 and 4).

Quite strikingly, the analysis of just one of Shakespeare's poems, "Venus and Adonis" (1593), yields a number of similar rhymes: *none* ~ *gone*, *alone* ~ *gone*, *bone* ~ *one*, *gone* ~ *sun*, *bone* ~ *gone*... I have already cited his *moon* ~ *sun* rhyme which comes from the same poem.

Similar rhymes are encountered by later poets, with Pope rhyming *sun* ~ *upon* and *none* ~ *own* in his "From an Essay on Criticism," while Herrick rhymes *none* ~ *on* in "His Grange, or Private Wealth." The point is that a similar underlying pattern is revealed here, showing that the most likely rhyme appears to be a variant or variants in the vicinity of [ʊ ~ ʏ ~ ɤ]. Note that Orton & Tilling (1971, 924) record [nʌn] "none" at 7 localities out of 13 in Norfolk. This hypothesis thus has a very plausible foundation.

4.2.1 Rhymes with <-own> Words

I have already pointed out Trudgill's contention that <ow> words such as *known*, *own*, etc. are not reduced to /ʊ/ in modern Norfolk English. Nonetheless, all indications are that New Englanders did pronounce <ow + n> words as monophthongal [ɤ] during the 18th century.

If an RP/GA speaker today accepts without question that Franklin's rhymes of *done* ~ *son*, *sun* ~ *run*, *run* ~ *undone*, *one* ~ *run*, *son* ~ *begun*, *none* ~ *one* as perfect rhymes, would it not be logical to conclude that rhymes such as *none* ~ *grown*, *stone* ~ *shown*, *unknown* ~ *stone* and *known* ~ *shown* were also perfect rhymes?

Our contemporary knowledge of RP/GA English often clouds our judgement on many of these issues. And yet, all of these appear to share this "short New England o," perhaps reflecting short [ɤ ~ ʏ]. There is clear evidence of this in Franklin's own poems, particularly as we know that *none*, *one*, *alone*, *stone* were pronounced with [ɤ]:

But home returned, Fashions he had *none*,
Only his Main and Tail were larger *grown*. (1734)

That to the Holy Father making *known*
Their woful Case, he might appoint them *One*. (1735)

Deaf, giddy, helpless, left *alone*,
To all my Friends a Burthen *grown*, (1737)

The Preacher fee'd, strait are his Virtues *shown*;
And render'd lasting by the sculptur'd *Stone*. (1737)

Content to live, content to die *unknown*,
Lord of myself, accountable to *none*. (1742)

Thus let me live, unseen, *unknown*,

Thus unlamented let me die,
Steal from the World, and not a *Stone* (1744)

Stone (*stoone*, Plymouth, 1687 and *stoon*, Chaucer, 1387) and *none* (Norfolk [nʌn], Upton and Tilling, 1970, Chaucer *noon*, 1387) are other key words repeatedly associated with the [ɹ] realization going back to at least the 17th century. It stands to reason that their rhymed <own> counterparts share the same value or a value close to it.

Other examples taken from his *Poor Richard's Almanack* are *unknown* ~ *done*, *done* ~ *own*, *alone* ~ *shown*, *own* ~ *blown*, all presumably realized as [ɹ ~ ɹ] or a sound close to it. *Undone* ~ *gone*, *zone* ~ *sun*, *sun* ~ *on*...

All these categories of rhyme were nevertheless judged to be “imperfect” in my initial assessment at the beginning of Chapter 15. As we can see here, the apparent concordance between Franklin's rhymes with those of Barlow and Dwight, combined with the Dorset and East Anglian evidence, and multiple examples taken from 17th-, 18th- and 19th-century American data suggests that these were intended to be perfect or at least near-perfect rhymes. Otherwise, what would be the point of rhyming at all?

Having said that, certain rhymes, such as *down* ~ *known*, are difficult to reconcile and, as explained previously, suggest that *down* may have been pronounced [dəun], as suggested by Dobson (cf. ME /u:/) or perhaps as a monophthong [dʊn ~ dɹn].

Lo, Earth smiles wide, and radiant Heav'n looks *down*,
All fair, all gay, and urgent to be *known*! (1750)

This brings us back to an early discussion in which *now* ~ *below* were matched. Here I concluded that both were reduced to a [əu] or even a more conservative [ɹu] realization. Orbeck gives several examples of words with <ow> which appear to be reduced to monophthongs such as *drond* [dɹɔnd ~ dɹɔnd?] or perhaps even [dɹɔnd?] for “drowned” (Plymouth, 1702) and *sothe* [sɔθ? ~ sɹθ] or [sɔθ?] for “south” (Plymouth, 1701) but also “about” as *abut* [a'but ~ a'bɹt]. For 17th-century Massachusetts, I would lean in favour of [ɹ] in the first two cases and a vowel in the vicinity of [ə'but ~ ə'but ~ ə'bɹt].

Nevertheless, in his RMS, Franklin transcribes “down” in his reformed orthography as **daa on** [dɔɹɔn] which, as we shall see in Chapters 25-26, is a realization that is closer to the pronunciations advocated by late 18th-century London orthopists (cf. MacMahon, 1998; cf. Hodges transcription of “our” as [ɔuɹ]; cf. Mazarin, 2020). The treatment of *Mouth* words, including their possible monophthongization, will be considered in the following chapter.

4.3 <oung>, <ung>, <ongue>: [ʏŋ]

Finally, the last category of rhymes in this first group of short o occurring before velar nasal [ŋ] offers a comparatively small corpus of examples. Grandgent, Krapp and Avis give no examples of <ong> or <ongue> rhymes with New England short o. Nevertheless, the following couplets suggest they might also have been pronounced [ʏŋ]:

When you see the poor Child that's weakly and *young*
Forc'd thro' thick and thin to trudge it *along*. (1743)

The Lying Habit is in some so *strong*,
To Truth they know not how to bend their *Tongue*; (1735)

But now Hypocrisy is grown so *strong*
The Heart's become a Servant to the *Tongue*. (1736)

The question then, is whether *along* and *strong* are pronounced [ə'lɔŋ] and [stɹɔŋ] or [ə'lɔŋ] and [stɹʏŋ]. Likewise, is Franklin's next rhyme, opposing *strong* ~ *wrong* also pronounced with [ʏŋ] or, as Grandgent argued, with the more commonplace [ɒ] pronunciation?

Death takes both the weak and the *strong*.
The lawyer takes from both right and *wrong*. (1737)

And *Liberty*, thy thousand *Tongues*
None silence who design no *Wrongs*; (1757)

Recall that Wright (1905, 17) asserts that, in the English Midlands, *wrong* and *song* are pronounced with an o-sounding [ù] vowel, which I interpreted to be [ʏŋ] on the basis of Wells' testimony and evidence from the SED for Norfolk (Orton & Tilling, 1970). Consider also Orbeck's example of *tung(e)* [tʊŋ ~ tɹŋ] for "tongue" (Groton, 1681; Watertown, 1678) (Orbeck, 1927, 45).

Another of Franklin's rhymes pairs *long* ~ *wrong* which, on the face of it, would suggest an [ɒ] realization of both words but, given Wright's testimony, the evidence points to [lɔŋ] ~ [ɹɔŋ].

Quarrels never could last *long*,
If on one side only lay the *wrong*. (1741)

For reasons explained here, the weight of the New England and regional English evidence would seem to lean in favour of a [ʏ ~ ʏ]. Evidence from Franklin's RMS on this point is inconclusive, however. For instance, Franklin transcribes "long" as **lonj** and "along" as **alaanj** [ə'lɔŋ]. In Chapter 28, I question whether his transcription of **lonj**, and not ***laanj**, may result from an unintentional lapse back into his native Boston pronunciation, namely, here [lɔŋ] or perhaps [lʏŋ]. Nevertheless, this would seem to be contradicted by the fact that I have proposed

that *y* represents his native [ɤ] or London [ʌ].

This conclusion [ɤ] realizations seems to be reinforced by Dwight's rhymes of *song* ~ *among*, *song* ~ *tongue*, *strong* ~ *young*, *song* ~ *wrong*. We systematically encounter similar hitches when considering rhymes such as *song* ~ *long*, *throng* ~ *along*, *long* ~ *wrong*... Additional evidence from Barlow's *Columbiad* also appears to support the hypothesis of an [ɤ ~ ʏ] realization or, once again, a vowel close to it: *throng* ~ *tongue*, *song* ~ *tongue*, *throng* ~ *song*, *strong* ~ *wrong*, etc. The common denominator seems, once again, to be a vowel in the vicinity of [ɤ]. See Whitehall's examples above (Whitehall, 1935).

Shorrocks (1998, 241) gives precise supporting evidence for contemporary Bolton: "wrong" [ɹʊŋ], "along" [ə'lʊŋ], "long" [lʊŋ], "belong" [br'lʊŋ], "strong" [sθrʊŋ]. All his transcriptions have [ʊ], a vowel very close to [ɤ], showing once again that the [ɤ] hypothesis for New England is a very plausible one.

It is likely, however, that the New England feature pool contained contrastive variants such as [ɒ] as well as [ʊ ~ ɤ ~ ʏ] which may have resulted from the mixing of dialects discussed as part of the koineization process during the first one hundred years of settlement (cf. Chapters 11 and 12). It is thus likely that the New England feature pool may initially have contained all the aforementioned variants.

A quick glance at Shakespeare's "Venus and Adonis," purportedly his first poem (1593), provides similar a set of rhymes to those we have just seen: *tongue* ~ *wrong*, *young* ~ *strong*, *wrong* ~ *tongue* (twice). Given the timeframe and that Shakespeare was a native of Warwickshire, the pronunciation here would seem to have been, once again, [ɤ ~ ɤ] or, perhaps, [ʊ ~ ʊ] at this date. Note also Alexander Pope's rhyme of *long* ~ *tongue* in his "The Rape of the Lock" (1712).

Orbeck's evidence, as slight as it is for our purposes, suggests that there were indeed two variant pronunciations in Massachusetts of this category of word: *yong* [jɔŋ? ~ jɤŋ?] (Plymouth, 1642) and *tung* [tɤŋ] (Groton, 1681).

To reinforce the arguments made above, I include here some of the spellings collected by Whitehall (1935, 194-1999) under the heading "Spellings for o before nasals." All of the following examples have a value /ɑ:/ in contemporary GA but [ɤ ~ ʊ] in 17th-century Suffolk and the London area.: *amongst*, Suffolk, 1613 (Kökeritz); *beyound*, Dorchester, Mass., 1636; *Boombard*, "bombard," England, 1696; *Soungys* "songs," Suffolk, 1450 (Kökeritz); *Stroung*, "strong," Suffolk, 1450 (Kökeritz); *wroung*, "wrong," Suffolk, 1450 (Kökeritz); *roungfully* "wrongfully," 1662, London (for New England poets' rhymes with *strong* and *wrong*, see above).

4.4 <o> + <ve>: [ɤv]

In the section dealing with ME /ɔ: ~ ɒ:/, we observed that it was raised to [ɔ:] and, as a bridge vowel to ME [ɔ:], must have fallen together with the latter. Under the

analogical effects of the GVS it rose to /u:/. The New England records show a mix of pronunciation varying between [u:] and [ɔ:] but also shortened variants.

Dobson describes many <oCe> words had already been raised to [u:] by the 16th century and points out that both northerners and easterners were prone to pronounce the <o> of *drove* and *grove* as [u:]. Dobson cites Milton's rhyme of *grove* ~ *love* which he transcribed as [gru:v] ~ [lu:v] while *go* and *too* were also raised in open syllables to [u:] as observed above for both Massachusetts and Essex (Dobson, 1968, 676-677). J. Smith (1674) pronounced *smoke* with [ɔ: ~ ɔ:] as a substantive, but [u:] when used as a verb (Dobson, 1968, 676). The past tense of *strike* was given as *stroke* by Bullokar and *strooken* [stɹu:kən] by Gil and Butler (1633) which Dobson describes as a "blend" of *stricken* and *struck*. Nevertheless, why could *strooken* not simply be interpreted as having a short [ʊ ~ ɪ ~ ɔ] vowel here as we have seen above?

The fact is that there was considerable oscillation between [u:] and their shortened variants throughout the 16th and 17th centuries and certainly into the 18th. Nevertheless, in New England, it cannot be ruled out that words like *move*, *prove*, *approve* (with [u:] in GA) and *drove* and *grove* (GA [ou]) may still have been pronounced with long /u:/ by some while others had adopted a shortened and progressively lowered and shortened to [ʊ ~ ʊ] > [ɪ ~ ɪ] pronunciation. This would have depended on their dialectal origins. In some more evolved varieties, it may have already moved to [ʌ] as suggested by Dobson (1968).

Burton (2010) provides valuable evidence for 19th-century Dorset which helps us better understand the broader dialectological picture in England during the 18th and 19th centuries. He makes an identical point to the one I have already expressed above, namely, whereas rhymes with *love* ~ *above* "present no problem," he then asks the following question which is directly relevant to our topic and which is precisely the one I asked myself when I first encountered the same hurdles investigating the poetry of the New Englanders.

When one or other of these words (i.e. *love* or *above*) is rhymed with *drove*, *grove*, *rove*, *move*, or *prove*, as not infrequently happens, should we consider it a purely conventional eye-rhyme, or is it a true rhyme indicating that the vowel of all of these words is /ʌ/? This question cannot be settled with certainty... Nevertheless, Jennings rhymes spellings *appruv'd* ~ *lov'd*; *pruv* ~ *love*, *pruf* ~ *ruf* (i.e. *roof*). (Burton, 2010, 60)

We have already seen that *proof* was reduced to [ʊ] or [ɪ] in New England. He then concludes that these examples support Barnes' own rhymes of *roof* ~ *buff* ~ *enough* and that, for this reason, "We may therefore confidently transcribe *move*, *prove*, and *roof* with /ʌ/ in Barnes' poems" but, he adds, "*drove*, *grove* and *rove* remain problematical" (Burton, 2010, 60).

Dobson's analysis of *drove* and *grove* being pronounced /u:/ during the 16th and 17th centuries as well as Milton's rhyme of *grove* [gru:v] ~ *love* [lu:v]

place the discussion on firmer ground. The rhymes by the New England poets demonstrate that *grove*, *drove* and *rove* had also been shortened to [u ~ ʊ] and, during a second phase, to [ɪ ~ ʏ]. The fact that the New Englanders also rhyme the very same words as Barnes indirectly answers Burton's question about Barnes' rhymes involving the very words in question, the only difference being that they were apparently pronounced with a fully centralized [ʌ] in Dorset.

Recall Grandgent's statement above, who states that *hoof*, *proof*, *roof*, *room* and *soon* were all realized in a manner "similar, in a way" to the shortening of [ɔ:] > [ɔ ~ ʏ]. I have interpreted his "similar, in a way" to mean raised [ɪ] and possibly [ʊ]. To repeat, this ties in well with Krapp's observations for New England: *aloof*, *boot*, *coop*, *Cooper*, *food*, *groom*, *hoof*, *hoop*, *Hooper*, *nook*, *proof*, *rood*, *roof*, *rook*, *rooster*, *root*, *soon*, *soot*, *spook*, *woof*, all with [ʊ] (1925, 149) and, I would add, [ɪ].

Dwight's rhymes involving rhymed couplets spelt with <-ove> are numerous in his *Greenfield Hill* and, in my view, provide evidence that the only pronunciation of *love* possible here is a phonetic range of [ɔ ~ ɪ ~ ʊ]. Considering that the vowel of *prove*, *approve* and *moves* in the following rhymes had also been shortened, this allowed the pairing of *love* ~ *prove*, *love* ~ *approve*, *loves* ~ *moves*. Other examples are *move* ~ *above* and *love* ~ *strove* which share the same shortened vocalic value. Finally, he rhymes *rove* ~ *improve*, *groves* ~ *moves* and *drove* ~ *move* respectively showing the same pattern. Given the apparent coherence of the historical data, it is difficult to simply assert that these are merely eye rhymes.

Note that in his poem "Venus and Adonis" Shakespeare rhymes *love* ~ *move*, *love* ~ *remove*, *prove* ~ *love*. Note that Dwight's *moves* ~ *groves* rhyme is exactly the same as John Milton's (1608-1674), cited above by Dobson, the main difference being, once again, that the New England vowel in *moves* and *groves* was apparently shortened. Dwight even has a string of rhymes involving *move* ~ *prove* ~ *love*.

Barlow offers identical rhymes in his *Columbiad*: *groves* ~ *improves*, *groves* ~ *loves*, *grove* ~ *move* (3 examples); *rove* ~ *prove*, *rove* ~ *improve*, *rove* ~ *move*. The list also includes *move* ~ *drove*, *move* ~ *strove*, *moved* ~ *proved*, *move* ~ *above* and *moves* ~ *loves*. The evidence is thus quite overwhelming in favour of a common [ʊ ~ ɪ] pronunciation for all of these words, again with possible [ʊ ~ ɔ] or even [ʌ] variants depending on the speaker and region. Allowance must be made for older speakers who may have preserved some of the longer pronunciations in these words. In Alexander Pope's "From an Essay on Criticism," he also rhymes *proved* ~ *beloved* and *prove* ~ *love*.

Mazarin (2020, 18) makes the following observations concerning Shakespeare's rhymes involving *move*, *prove* and *love* but, given the timeframe, he opts for a [u(:)] interpretation.

Shakespeare confirms the half-A pattern among the back vowels by rhyming *good*

with *bud*, *mood* and *wood*. All have [u(:)]. Shakespeare's Sonnet 35 rhymes *moon* and *sun* with *done* /mu:n, sun, dun/. Sonnet 49 has *come* – *sum* /kum, sum/, and Sonnet 116 rhymes *compass come* with *doom* /kumpas, kum, du:m/. The word *love* fluctuated; Gil transcribes it /luv/ and Smith and Hart as /lu:v/. Either way, Shakespeare's 154 sonnets rhyme *love* 18 times with reflexes of *move* or *prove* [65]. *Later poets retain these conventional rhymes with move and prove even after love becomes* /lʌv/. (my italics)

Mazarin assumes, perhaps correctly, that Shakespeare's pronunciation was /luv/. The point he makes though is that later poets were pronouncing this *Strut* vowel as [ɹ] or [ʁ] in England, and I am proposing the same thing for New England, and perhaps other regions of the colonies. The sticking point in both England and New England is that, long after the *Strut-Foot* split had occurred, dated by some to have occurred around 1600, many varieties retained the older [ɹ] pronunciation, particularly in the Midlands and the North of England. Furthermore, despite the discrepancy in the dating of /u/ > /ɹ/, 16th-century manifestations of [ɹ] cannot entirely be ruled out. I have already cited Franklin's rhyme of *moon* ~ *sun* where, like Cooper a few decades before Franklin's birth, both words were very probably realized as [ɹ]. Franklin was only twenty-seven when he wrote these verses rhyming *sun* and *moon*, just as Shakespeare did a hundred and fifty years before.

Observe the daily circle of the sun,
And the short year of each revolving moon: (1733)

Franklin's poetry offers other examples close or identical to Barnes' rhymes.

To buy, to pay, to blame, or to approve,
Within, without, below-stairs, and above;
To shine in every Corner, like the *Sun*,
8 Still working every where, or looking on. (1748)

Note that the rhyme of *approve* ~ *above* is of the same type that troubled Burton (2010, 60) in his analysis of Barnes' poetry: *appruv'd* ~ *lov'd*, *love* ~ *drove*, *love* ~ *rove*, *above* ~ *move*, *above* ~ *prove*.

At first sight, one might jump to the conclusion that these are simple eye rhymes. However, returning to the very first poem that Franklin ever composed at the age of thirteen, entitled "The Taking of Teach the Pirate" (1719), he rhymes *rover* ~ *lover* strongly suggesting that this [ɹ ~ ʁ] feature was part and parcel of his idiolect and probably that of his siblings too (if not his parents). Recall that most of his older half-brothers and half-sisters were born in Northamptonshire.

Have you heard of Teach the *Rover*,
And his Knavery on the Main;
How of Gold he was a *Lover*,
How he *lov'd* all ill-got Gain! (1719)

Importantly, many years later, he offers the same rhymes here as his fellow New Englanders. This poem and all those composed in his *Poor Richard's Almanack* before 1757 were composed *before* his fifteen-year stay in London. This demonstrates that vowels now pronounced /u:/, /ou/ and /ʌ/ in GA were far closer to one another in 18th-century Massachusetts.

I rest, I wake, I drink, I sometimes *love*,
I read, I write, I settle, or I *rove*; (1742)

Compare this couplet from Dwight's *Greenfield Hill*:

How pleas'd amid thy varied walks I *rove*,
Sweet, cheerful walks of innocence, and *love*,

Franklin offers multiple examples of this kind including this cross-rhyme of *improve* ~ *love*.

Think of your Beauties in their *bloom*,
The Spring of sprightly Youth *improve*;
For cruel Age, alas, will *come*,
And then 'twill be too late to *love*. (1737)

Then heed ye FAIR, e'er you their Cunning *prove*,
And think of Treach'ry, while they talk of *Love*. (1742)

Always himself, nought can his Virtue *move*,
Unsway'd by Party, Hatred, Gain, or *Love*. (1756)

Without Good-Breeding Truth is disapprov'd
That only makes superior Sense *belov'd*. (1744)

Are her Compatriots all, by her *belov'd*,
In Nature near, tho' far by Space *remov'd*; (1758)

His Labours by a fresh Industry *mov'd*,
HEVELIUS, FLAMSTEAD, HALLEY, since *improv'd*. (1756)

Fram'd on imaginary Poles to *move*,
With Lines, and different Circles mark'd *above*. (1756)

Or ask of yonder argent Fields *above*,
Why JOVE's Satellites are less than *Jove*? (1736)

Here too, it seems that the most likely pronunciation of these vowels is in the area of short [ʊ ~ ʊ̃] and, viewed more broadly, a possible array from [ø(:)] > [u(:)] depending on the dialect. Note also Alexander Pope's *Jove* ~ *love*, *prove* ~ *love* ("From an Essay on Criticism," 1711).

With regard to Burton's remark that the possibility that *grove*, *drove*, *rove* being pronounced /ʌ/ is "problematical," it is ironic that this earlier 18th-century

New England data should throw light on William Barnes' Dorset pronunciations. Based on what we have seen here, it looks very much like these words were indeed pronounced [ʌ] by Barnes and in shades of a more conservative [ɤ ~ ʏ] by our poets. What better proof to demonstrate that, regarding this specific point, there was and is a direct link between the colonial varieties of American English, contemporary New England English and specific dialects in England itself, past and present.

Conclusion

Throughout this entire discussion involving New England short u and short o and, perhaps, also the analysis presented regarding ME /u/ and “u obscurum” in Chapter 18, I have argued that a vowel resembling or identical to [ɤ] posited by Wells (1988,199) for non-split *Strut-Foot* was far more widespread than has generally been supposed. We have seen that for New England, this [ɤ] was encountered in not only *Strut* and *Foot* words but also a shortened subgroup of *Goose* words. Grandgent's precise description of a subclass of shortened *Goat* words (< ME /ɔ:/) is what permitted me to conclude that “New England short o” was [ɤ], and that it was thus slightly lower than Wells' account. For reasons explained earlier in Chapter 20 and 21, I concluded that shortened <oo> words (*hoof, roof, room, soon*, etc.) probably corresponded more precisely to [ɤ] or [ʊ] depending on the speaker.

The most surprising discovery, however, was the subclass of *Lot* words, normally analyzed as [ɒ ~ ɑ], that appear to have fallen together with ME long /ɔ: ~ ɒ:/. Although this is an obvious simplification of reality, these words were raised to /ɔ:/ and /u:/ and later shortened and lowered to [ɔ ~ ʊ ~ ɤ] in various parts of England and New England. We also saw that the final stage was the lowering and centralization of many of these words in RP/GA (*none, done, come*, etc.) to /ʌ/. The evidence from the 17th-century Massachusetts town records provided credible evidence that the raising of ME /ɔ/ via ME /ɔ:/ did indeed take place and that in this particular New England koine, the lowered pronunciation was still [ɤ] at the end of the 18th century and perhaps into the 19th century.

As I came to the end of this investigation, I came across Beal's account of the northern treatment of “unsplit” /ʊ/ (Beal, 1999, 135-137) which seems to support this analysis. She explains that some “provincials” failed to use the “rounded vowel” in *Foot* words such as “employing what Walker saw as the “more regular” /ʌ/. Citing Wells (1988, 135; 1990, 400) she points out that “whilst the Scottish accent of English has the /ʌ/ phoneme, the distribution of this is different from that of RP: ‘it must be noted that many *foot* words have Scots dialect forms with /ʌ/.” She then goes on to suggest that Kenrick's observations “could well result from the persistence of an “intermediate vowel” and then cites Charles Jones

(1991) who interpreted an account provided by Sylvester Douglas. The latter describes a “smothered vowel” which he claimed was found in a small lexical set composed of *Tully*, *scut*, and *rut* while a different vowel was used in words such as *flood*, *blood*, *love*, *dove*, *come*, *couplet*, *punt*, *hulk*, *rump*, *dub*, and *mud*. Beal continues writing:

The latter vowel is described by Douglas as closer to the vowel found long in *prove*, *tomb*, *two*, etc., and short in *pull*, *full*, *pulpit*, etc. (/ʊ/). Jones suggests that the “smothered” vowel is perhaps [ʌ] or [ə], and the “other shade” perhaps [ɤ], and quotes Wells as follows: “The split of the old short /ʊ/ into two distinct qualities seems to have been established by the middle of the seventeenth century. *It may well have originated as an allophonic alternative, with unrounded [ɤ] the forerunner of the modern /ʌ/ in most environments, but a rounded quality (modern /ʊ/) retained after labials.*” (my italics) (Wells, 1982, 197, quoted in Jones, 1991, 20)

Using different data based on Grandgent’s descriptions, I came to a similar conclusion for New England, the difference being that the generalized use of [ɤ] or [ɥ] may have affected broader classes of words in New England. The evidence would also seem to support the description of the phenomenon provided by Trudgill for Norwich where he described the relevant vowel as /ʊ/. I showed numerous examples from the SED (Orton & Tilling, 1970) where words such as *blood*, *flood*, *foot*, *duck*, *stump*, *jump*, etc. were still all pronounced with [ɤ] (often alongside [ʊ] and [ʌ]).

Beal continues her presentation, once again citing Jones (1991, 20) who points out that,

if Douglas’ observation of a triple development for Middle English [u] is a correct and accurate one, the existence of some “intermediate’ [ɤ] stage is attested by him at a date later than most other observers.” Douglas, then, may well have been describing a variety more conservative than that of Walker, in which lexical diffusion of [ɤ] > [ʌ] had not progressed very far and the phonologization of this originally allophonic split had not occurred. Other observers such as Kenrick may have been describing varieties in which the ‘intermediate’ [ɤ] had spread throughout the lexical set without developing to [ʌ]. (my italics) (quoted in Beal, 1999, 135-137)

This is precisely my point: this unsplit /ɤ/ was also alive and well not only throughout the Midlands as pointed out by Wells (1989, 351-353) and Beal and Jones (op. cit.) and Wright (1905, 17) but also in New England where it had been imported by settlers from the concerned regions during the “Great Migration” to Massachusetts between 1640-1700.

Manifestly, the same vowel described here must have been very close to the one that Franklin and his fellow New Englanders were still pronouncing at the end of the 18th century in their poetry and, almost certainly, in their natural spoken English. The number of words in which this pronunciation appears to have occurred was certainly far greater in their day than it was towards the end

of the 19th century when Grandgent (1899) claims it was used in only fifty words by educated speakers (but in many more among rustic Massachusettsans).

23. Diphthongs and Consonants

Introduction

This first half of this chapter outlines the history of English diphthongs and their development in the North American colonies beginning in the 17th century. The second half outlines the principal aspects of the consonantal system that characterized the colonial feature pool as well as fringe elements that were gradually eliminated during the koineization process and with increasing literacy.

This concludes our discussion about the genesis of American English phonology and the attempt to identify the major phonetic characteristics of Franklin’s idiolect. Chapter 24 is dedicated to presenting a survey of some major characteristics of 17th- and 18th-century New England phonology and as well identifying the innovative and conservative features of the Massachusetts koine.

1. Diphthongs

All but two of the original ME diphthongs evolved into monophthongs in RP and GA but not necessarily in the modern dialects of English. They are generally presented as follows:

ME /ai/	ai > æi > ɛi > ɛ:
ME /ɛu/ and /ɪu/	ɪu > ɪu > ju: ɛu > ɪu > ju:
ME /oi/ and ME /ui/	ui > ɔi > ɔi > ɔi ɔi > ɔi > ɔi > ɔi
ME /au/	au > æu > [ɔ: ~ ɒ: ~ ɑ:]
ME /ou/	ou > ɔu > ɔ: > ɔu

Although this scheme is convenient and helpful to acquire a better understanding of RP/GA English, the following presentation of the early colonial developments

is far more complex than this straightforward model would suggest.

1.1 ME /ai/ > [æi] > [ɛi] > [ɛ:] > [ɛ ~ ɛ̃]¹

Dobson (1968, 768) informs us that Palgrave (1530) had two variant forms of ME /ai/, [ai] and [ɛi]. This demonstrates to me that, between the shift from [ai] to [ɛi], there had to have existed an intermediate [æi] variant as early as the 16th century. These diphthongal variants remained the dominant forms in better educated circles throughout the 16th and much of the 17th century with a preference for [ai (~ æi)]. This variant has survived to this day in places like Dorset and Norfolk, thus throwing the dating of the GVS out of kilter.

However, citing evidence from Bellot (1586), Mazarin (2020, 6) demonstrates that ME /ai/ was already pronounced [ɛ:] by the lower-class London speakers by the end of the 16th century, far earlier than was generally believed. It is on the basis of this early shift to [ɛ:] that he chose to add his fourth B1 and B2 type phases to his historical chronology of the English vocalic system (as opposed to Barber's three phases (Barber, 1997)). Associated with the popular *mopsae* varieties of London English, this feature gradually spread from the capital to the surrounding regions. This is yet another example of a formerly stigmatized feature gaining momentum over time and eventually coming to be accepted by educated speakers as the standard. I shall argue that this was Franklin's natural pronunciation of [ɛi ~ æi] in Massachusetts.

Görlach (2012, 597) writes that this [ɛ:] was raised to [ɛ̃:] during the 18th century but it was not until the 1800s that this [ɛ̃:] was diphthongized to /eɪ/.

The ME /ai/ diphthong narrowed to /ɛi/ and subsequently monophthongized to /ɛ:/, which joined the GVS-raising to /e:/. As a result of this merger with former /a:/ as in *make*, a large number of homophones were created in the mid-17th century, e.g. *days* : *daze*, *hail* : *hale*, *raise* : *raze*, *tail* : *tale*. In Late Modern English, the monophthong developed into a new diphthong /eɪ/, representing the modern state of affairs.

Nevertheless, as I have shown in previous discussions, New England varieties retained the older [ɛi] diphthong (alongside even older [æi]), which coexisted alongside innovative [ɛ: ~ ɛ̃:] throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. It is therefore possible, if not probable, that this [ɛi] variant never fully disappeared in the spoken varieties and may have spread by analogy to *Face* words by the end of the 18th or early 19th centuries, giving us the modern normalized RP/GA /eɪ/ realization for both. Orbeck (1927, 50) was less certain about the co-existence of [ɛi] and [æi] variables in *Wait* words and asked:

1 Cf. ME /ɛ:/ and ME /a:/ in Chapter 18 and 19.

But was the diphthong [aei] or [ei:] or some approximation to the latter? The evidence is all in favor of [ei]. The *ay* forms, to be sure, may suggest [aei], but there is in addition to the [ei] forms much incidental evidence in support of an [ei] interpretation. The symbols used here are those largely employed to represent ME *ai*, which we interpreted to mean a close diphthongal element [ei].

Here again, this is not an “either/or” decision. Orbeck, whose work is exemplary, did not have access to later studies such as Dobson’s which reveals the full range of pronunciations proposed by the orthoepists. Based on their evidence, it seems quite certain that older forms of ME /ai/ [æi] were alive and well in the New England feature pool, but also back in England, and for far longer than Görlach’s or Orbeck’s summaries would lead us to believe. For instance, Dobson (1968: 779) shows that Gil (1612) still pronounced *Wait* [æi] Wallis (1653) and Wilkins (1668) also shared the diphthongal [ai]. The latter even refused the [ei] variant. In all likelihood, Josiah and Benjamin Franklin the elder shared [æi] or [ei]. On the other hand, Dobson (Ibid.) cites Hodges (1644) for whom ME /ai/ was diphthongal [ei] in a number of words. Finally, only eleven years before Franklin’s birth, Cooper states in his *Grammatica* (1685) that [ei] was more common than [ai] (Dobson, 1968, 771) suggesting that the two variants co-existed for quite some time. Here again, this older [ai] does not preclude the presence of [æi] and [ei]. It is on this basis that I proposed their existence in the New England feature pool.

Given that [æi] was a prestige pronunciation for B2 speakers like Wallis and Wilkins, it was probably also heard in the mouths of New England preachers, many of whom were Oxford and Cambridge graduates. All indications are that [æi] was still in common use, probably among the older generation of formally-educated New Englanders throughout the 17th century. A specific example of this elite is Rev. Allin, whom we discussed in Chapter 11 and who was educated at Cambridge. In reality, however, it is doubtful that speakers paid attention to the distinction between [ei] and [æi] in their everyday dealings with others (much like [i:ðəɹ] or [aɪðəɹ] today) and the pronunciation differences probably went unnoticed. Toward the end of the 17th century, the most dominant realization appears to have been [ei] with [æi] becoming increasingly recessive. Both were in competition with the formerly “vulgar” [ɛ:] variant which was rapidly gaining ground in England but also in America.

Historically, the process can be explained rather straightforwardly. Under the metaphonic influence of [i], the second element of the ME /ai/ diphthong, [a] was progressively raised in the following manner: [ai] > [æi] > [ei] and simplified to the [ɛ:] monophthong, which was further raised to [ɛ̄:]. To conclude, the 17th-century Massachusetts feature pool was composed of several competing variants for *Wait* words: [ai] ~ [æi] as well as more evolved [ei] ~ [ɛ: ~ ɛ̄:] realizations.

Likewise, the shift from /ei/ in *Deceit* words to [ɛ:] > [ɛ̄:] > [ɛ̄:] > [i:] is revealed

in a large number of words of French origin: *conceive*, *deceive*, *perceive*, *receive*, *conceit*, *deceit*. These were pronounced [ɛ:] by Robinson (1617) and in *receipt* by Levins (1570) (Dobson, 1968, 650). *Leisure* is pronounced by Cheke (1555) with ME ai [ɛi] but [ɛ:] by Price (1668). In passing, near the Kentucky and West Virginia borders, in Jackson Co., southern Ohio, I have recorded [ɛi] for *leisure*, *pleasure* and *measure* (German, personal notes).

Coles (1674, 1679) gives *vein*, *feign*, *heinous* with both [ɛi] and [ɛ:] while Sir Isaac Newton (circa 1661) indicates *weigh* with short [ɛ] but *slay* as having [ɛ:]. All of this shows, once again, the inherent instability of the phonological systems even among those who were considered “polite” speakers. Mazarin, one of the few who has looked into the early American and English data, remarked that in Massachusetts, the older [ɛi] pronunciation contrasted with *Face* words which were realized as [ɛ:].

Reaching for a way to summarize the dialect shown in the Massachusetts records, I am startled by the complexity of sub-groups I have described within type C. These colonial villagers used a “soft” type C2 with diphthongal WAIT; in other words, they realized MEAT as either /ɛ:/ or /i:/ (*rasonable*, *meeneing*), and they distinguished WAIT /ɛi/ from FACE /ɛ:/. (Mazarin, 2020, 10)

In my view, the <ai>, <ay> spellings could thus represent the older [æi] pronunciations here, although, as I indicated above, Orbeck leans in favour of [ɛi]. For the reasons mentioned previously, I have included both [æi] and [ɛi] variants in the following transcriptions: *desair* [dɛ'zæiəɪ ~ dɛ'zɛiəɪ] (Groton, 1678), *layable* ['læiəbɪ ~ 'lɛiəbɪ] (Groton, 1693), *haight* [hæi(ç)t ~ hei(ç)t] (Dedham, 1673). Nevertheless, Orbeck insists that “Orthographic a, it will be remembered, represented normally a front sound” and he continues “But if there is still some doubt, the forms in ei and ey should be conclusive” (i.e. of an [ɛi] pronunciation). Recall also that [ç] pronunciation for “height” was still heard among older/more conservative speakers at this time. Although Mazarin associates this [æi] with the more archaic Type B phase, the memory of this formerly prestigious realization may have permitted it to persist for a longer time in the colonies (cf. Gil, Wilkins and others did preserve it).

Other <ai> spellings could reinforce the possibility of an [æi] realization. For instance, the Groton records (Mass.) have *resaiued*, likely [rɛ'sɛivd ~ rɛ'sæivd] for “received” (1683). ME /ai/ > /æi/ could be shown in the Watertown records (Mass.) in *resaights* [ɹɛ'sɛi(ç)ts ~ rɛ'sæi(ç)ts] (1673), with the introduction of non-etymological <gh> as well as *resaite* for “receipt(s)” (1674) perhaps realized as [rɛ'sæit ~ rɛ'sɛit]. The Duxbury records (Mass.) give “Peabody” as both *pabodie* (1642), presumably ['pɛ:ˌbɒdi] but also *paybodie* ['pæiˌbɒdi ~ 'pɛiˌbɒdi] (1683). But these spellings suggest that the shift to monophthongal [ɛ:] was only partial at this point and that the diphthong may still have been preserved by some speakers into the 18th century. ME [ai] > [æi ~ ɛi] alongside more evolved popular

London [ɛ:] were elements of the feature pool. As I indicated at the beginning of this section, in North America, it may be that the [ɛi] pronunciation of *Wait* words remained dominant and may eventually have spread analogically to <aCe> words: *fame*, *wane*, *fade*, *state*, *case*, etc.

The Watertown records (Mass.) give an interesting spelling of “neither” as *naythur*, which may represent [næiðəɪ] or [neiðəɪ] (1672) and *aythur* [æiðəɪ ~ ɛiðəɪ] (1674). However, the Huntington records (NY) have *ither* (1662), *ithar* (1663) and *nither*, which are interpreted by Krapp (1925, 126) as indicating “a pronunciation with [aɪ]” by which I assume he must mean [Δi] or [əi] reflecting the pronunciation of the letter <i>, [əi ~ Δi ~ ɾi ~ ɛi] at the time. However, Dobson (1968) maintains that the [Δi] in *either* or *neither* was not attested before 1700. I found only one occurrence of *nither* in the Watertown records (1894, 140). The anonymous editor states that the entry is prior to 1646. Krapp also mentions that, in his day, [ɛ:ðəɪ] and [nɛ:ðəɪ] were still heard in America but confined to “dialect.”²

In modern Bolton dialect, Shorrocks (1998, 179) gives all these <ei> words with [ɛ:]: *deceit* [drʰɛ:t], *neither* [nɛ:ðə], *either* [ɛ:ðə]... a pronunciation which is still common throughout large areas of England and Ireland (cf. Wright, 1905). Note that Grandgent (1899, 237) gives the same [drʰɛ:t] pronunciation of *deceit* for Massachusetts.

To repeat, Orbeck (1927, 50) argues that the <ei, ey, ay, ai> spellings of *Wait* words in 17th-century Massachusetts were most likely realized as [ɛi]. I have argued that conservative speakers would have preserved the older [æi] realizations on the basis of attestations by Wilkins and Cooper. The following are my transcriptions: *waite* [wæit ~ weit] for “wait” (Watertown, 1657), *waight* [wæi(ç)t ~ wei(ç)t] for “wait” (with non-etymological <gh> [ç]) (Watertown, 1662), *hay ways* [hɛi weiz ~ hæi wæiz] for “highways” (Watertown, 1662). Here we see *highway* realised as [ɛi ~ æi] on its way to RP/GA /aɪ/. *Haight* “height” (Dedham, 1673) may also represent [hæi(ç)t], another example of an intermediate pronunciation before the shift to modern [ai]. It does appear that [əi] variants were a possibility in New England during the 17th century.

“Way(s)” is given a wide range of spellings: *otherwayse* [ʔðəɪwæiz ~ -weiz] for “otherwise,” *other waise* [ʔðəɪwæiz ~ -weiz] “otherwise” (Watertown, 1674), *wayes* [wæiz ~ weiz] for “ways” (Watertown, 1650; Groton, 1669), *wais* [wæiz ~ weiz] (Plymouth, 1693), *waise* [wæiz ~ weiz] (Watertown, 1679; Groton, 1682)... “Otherwise” written *otherwayse*, etc. appears to result from the reanalysis of “otherwise” to “otherways.” This suggests that *Price* and *Wait* words had merged for certain speakers, for instance, “wise” [weiz ~ wæiz] (increasingly pronounced

2 An Irish colleague once told me that, as a schoolboy, he had asked his teacher whether one should pronounce “either” as [i:ðəɪ] or [aiðəɪ], to which the teacher responded, “[ɛ:ðəɪ] of ‘em is correct”!

[wəɪz] in the 18th century) and [weɪz ~ wæɪz] for “ways” were homophones for many. The precise quality of the diphthong is nevertheless elusive. “Always” is also spelt *alwise* in the early records and may represent either [ˈɒlwɛɪz] or [ˈɒlwæɪz].

If there are any doubts about the late survival of [æɪ] in 17th- and 18th-century America, any reservations should be tempered by the fact that it is still heard in the contemporary dialects of England. We have already mentioned Burton’s study of Barnes’ pronunciation, which demonstrates that *Wait* words were still pronounced [æɪ] during the mid-19th century (supposedly a 16th-century pronunciation) and his examples of *maid*, *paid* and *vein* with this diphthong. Recall that we saw *rooadway* “roadway” being pronounced [ɹʌədwæɪ] (Orbeck, 1927, 43), “roadway” [ɹʊdwæɪ] (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 459). Note, Barnes’ *ruoad* [ɹʌəd] for Dorset (Burton, 2010, 94-96) and “road” [ɹʌəd] for Massachusetts (Avis, 1971, 394) and [fɹæt], [fɹt], [fut] in Norfolk for “foot” (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 814).³

Once again, this demonstrates the danger of attributing overly rigid dates for sound changes. It is therefore probable that many of these <air> words had variant pronunciations in [æ:ɪ] or [æɪɪ] as was the case in Dorset. Indeed, Burton (2010, 84) points out that words such as *key*, *way*, *clay*, *grey*, *day*, *say*, *play*, etc. had three different pronunciations in Barnes’ poems: /e:/ (i.e. [ɛ:]), /æɪ/, and /ə:ɪ/. The phonetic range of each word thus apparently served as part of the poets’ toolkit from which they were able to pick and choose specific realizations in accordance with the desired rhyme.

1.2.1 The New England Poets

The New England poets show similar variation. By the end of the 18th century, the New England poets may still have oscillated between [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] and the diphthongal [ɛɪ] realizations. In this first case, Dwight rhymes words in <ay>, <ai> and <ey> alongside <ea> words. In this case, the diphthongized variant was probably not used: *display’d* [disˈplɛ:d] ~ *o’erspread* [oˈspɹɛ(:)d], *array’d* [əˈɹɛ:d] ~ *head* [hɛ(:)d]. In our discussion of *Meat* words, we examined some of the rhymes in Dwight’s *Conquest of Canaan* in which he matches *sway* [swɛ:] ~ *sea* [sɛ:], *stray* [stɹɛ:] ~ *sea* [sɛ:]. In his *Greenfield Hill*, we are probably dealing with monophthongs: *obey* [ɒˈbe:] ~ *sway* [swɛ:], *tea* [tɛ:] ~ *away* [əˈwɛ:] while Barlow in his *Columbiad* rhymes *sea* [sɛ:] ~ *way* [wɛ:] ~ *sway* [swɛ:].

Considering the numerous <ay> spellings in the preceding examples, one cannot rule out that *display’d*, *array’d*, *sway*, *stray*, *away*, and *way* were still pronounced [ɛɪ] at the end of the 18th century, just as in contemporary GA. I am assuming that the [æɪ] variants were now rare in educated speech. Could

3 Barnes’ *ruoad* [ɹʌəd] for Dorset (Burton, 2010, 94-96) and “road” [ɹʌəd] for Massachusetts (Avis, 1971, 394). Note [fɹæt], [fɹt], [fut] in Norfolk for “foot” (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 814).

the diphthongal [ɛi] words form a perfect rhyme with *sea* in the above-cited examples? This cannot be entirely ruled out. Wright (1905, 586) recorded “sea” as [sɛi ~ sei] for Cumbria, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire as well as Co. Antrim but, more importantly for our purposes, Suffolk. Recall the Suffolk people constituted the majority of the inhabitants of Boston in Franklin’s childhood. I evoked the possibility of diphthongized pronunciations of *Meat* words in Franklin’s rhymes (cf. Chapter 18).

As we saw in Chapter 19, <ai> + <r> was most likely a lowered variant of [ɛɪ] > [æɪ]. Dwight rhymes *air* [æɪ] ~ *war* [wæɪ] ~ *despair* [des'pæɪ]. In his *Conquest of Canaan*, he pairs *proclaim* [pɹɔ'kleɪm ~ pɹɔ'kleɪm] ~ *stream* [stɹɛɪm ~ stɹɛɪm] and in his *Greenfield Hill* has *sea* [sɛɪ ~ sɛɪ ~ sei?] ~ *convey* [kɔn'veɪ ~ kɔn'veɪ ~ kɔn'vei]. Philip Freneau gives *raise* [ɹɛɪz ~ ɹɛɪz ~ ɹeɪz?] ~ *seas* [sɛɪz ~ sɛɪz ~ seɪz?], but Ladd rhymes *vailed* [vɛɪld ~ vɛɪld] ~ *concealed* [kɔn'sɛɪld ~ kɔn'sɛɪld]...

In view of the evidence, the majority of Franklin’s rhymes suggest that he favoured the monophthongal [ɛɪ ~ ɛɪ] pronunciations of these words. For instance, he seems to have pronounced *deceit* as [dɹɛɪt ~ **dɹɛɪt**] just as Lancashire speakers do today (cf. Shorrocks, 1998, 179). Wright (1905, 402) records this pronunciation of *deceit* with [ɛɪ] not only for Lancashire but also Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, Wiltshire, Somerset as well as Sussex and Dorset. In a rhyme composed in *Poor Richard’s Almanack*, Franklin rhymes *deceit* and *great* (1746 and 1758 issues): [dɹɛɪt] ~ [gɹɛɪt]. Nevertheless, Lowell writes *gretter*, suggesting the vowel was short and, for a time it must have been. Had it been long in the 15th century it would have been subjected to the GVS, in which case it would have developed into [gɹi:t]. According to Samuel Johnson, this is precisely the pronunciation attributed to Lord Young, “the finest speaker of the House of Commons” (Bowen, 1905).

Women and Wine, Game and *Deceit*,
Make the Wealth small, and the Wants *great*. (1746, 1758)

Nevertheless, one can wonder whether “great” was already [gɹɛɪt ~ gɹɛɪt]? If so, chances are that “deceit” would have had an [ɛi] diphthong as well. In the following examples, each of the words below appears to be pronounced with a short [ɛ].

S---l the Smith hath lately sworn and *said*,
That no Disease shall make him keep his *Bed*; (1735)

That ☽ Luna’s horn’d, it cannot well be *said*,
8 Since I ne’er heard that she was *married*. (1733)

In this last example, *married* is trisyllabic and pronounced [ˈmæɪɪəd] demonstrating that “said” is pronounced [sed] here. This rhyme appears to have been used for humorous effect.

Reason's impartial Voice shall ne'er condemn,
The glorious Purpose of so wise an Aim. (1757)

Although it is difficult to imagine *condemn* with a long [ɛ:] to match “aim” [nɛ:m ~ nɐ:m], but not impossible. If not, this was merely a close rhyme. All of the following appear to have the same [ɛ:] quality. Note that all of Orbeck's examples below have rhymes with <ei> words which may preserve the older [ɛi] or older [æi]. Recall Johnson's remark that “only the Irish” pronounce “great” as *grait*, presumably [gɹæit ~ gɹæitʔ] (Bowen, 1905). This realization may have been spreading on analogy with <ay>, <ai>, <ei> words. Having said that, innovative [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] is also a possibility here.

Orbeck provides numerous spellings of this kind from the town records, which may reinforce the case for a diphthongal realization of the following examples: *concaiuē* [kɔn'seiv ~ kɔn'sæiv] “conceive” (Dedham, 1661), *resaights* [ɹɛ'seɪ(ç)ts ~ ɹɛ'sæi(ç)ts] “receipts” (Watertown, 1673), *resaght* [ɹɛ'seɪ(ç)ts ~ ɹɛ'sæi(ç)ts], *resait* [ɹɛ'seɪts ~ ɹɛ'sæits] (Watertown, 1679), *resaight* [ɹɛ'seɪ(ç)ts ~ ɹɛ'sæi(ç)ts], *desayt* [dɛ'seit ~ dɛ'sæit] “deceit” (Dedham, 1676), *kay* [kei ~ kæi] “key” (Dedham, 1694), *eyther* ['eɪðəɪ] “either” (Dedham, 1637; Groton, 1665), *ayther* ['eɪðəɪ ~ 'æiðəɪ] (Groton, 1682; Watertown, 1673), *eyther* ['eɪðəɪ] (Dedham, 1681), *naythur* ['neɪðəɪ ~ 'næiðəɪ] “neither” (Watertown, 1672; Dedham, 1699).

Orbeck adds that, “in these particular instances an [ei] pronunciation certainly existed. The <ai> and <ay> spellings may represent a slight diphthongal sound... but the scribes did not consistently differentiate between two such closely related sounds as [e:] and [ei]” (Orbeck, 1927, 35).⁴ This provides us with a potential phonetic range for this word of [kɹɪk ~ kɹɪk ~ kɹæik ~ kɹæk] which gives us an idea of the overall complexity and variety of the feature pool in any given colony.

Fluctuation between [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] and [ɛi] seems to appear in the following words: *eich* [eitʃ] (Plymouth, 1639) and *ech* [ɛ(:)tʃ] (Dedham, 1636); *crick* [kɹɪk ~ kɹɪk] (Groton, 1682), *creicke* [kɹæik] (Plymouth, 1655) and *creck* [kɹæk ~ kɹækʔ] (Plymouth, 1704) (Orbeck, 1927, 36).

The same phenomenon appears in words that are spelt <ange> which are probably already pronounced [ɛi] *dainger* ['dɛɪnzəɪ ~ 'dæɪnzəɪ] (Dedham, 1653), *exchainge* [ɛks'tʃeɪnz ~ ɛks'tʃæɪnz] (Dedham, 1661; Plymouth, 1703), *exchaing* [ɛks'tʃeɪnz ~ ɛks'tʃæɪnz] (Dedham, 1704), *raynge* [ɹeɪnz ~ ɹæɪnz] (Watertown, 1669), *rainge* [ɹeɪnz ~ ɹæɪnz] (Plymouth, 1694), *rainging* [ɹeɪnzɪŋ ~ 'ɹæɪnzɪŋ] (Plymouth, 1685), *straingers* ['stɹæɪnzəɪz ~ 'stɹæɪnzəɪz] (Plymouth, 1702), *strainger* ['stɹæɪnzəɪ ~ 'stɹæɪnzəɪ] (Plymouth, 1702; Dedham, 1703) (Orbeck, 1927, 57). This also seems to confirm that [ɛi] pronunciations had extended from <ai>, <ay>, <ei> and <ey> spellings to <ate>, <ange>, etc. by analogy as early as the 17th

4 Orbeck's [e:] corresponds to my [ɛ: ~ ɛ:].

century and perhaps before. These ME /a/ words appear to have fallen together with *Wait* words (cf. Chapter 19, Sequence 3).

The oscillation between these variant forms gave the freedom to poets to adapt their rhymes as they saw fit. Since the audiences were also accustomed to this kind of variation, it is likely that they were not particularly shocked by such poetic licence. Here are a few examples from Franklin's own poems. Here again, the possibility that all of these words may have already had a diphthongal [ei] at this time must be considered as a possible variant. As we have seen, Franklin's most likely disparitary pronunciations, at least while he was in London, was probably innovative [ɛ: ~ ɛ:].

I griev'd, but recollected *strait*,
'Twas bootless to contend with *Fate*: (1740)

On him true HAPPINESS shall *wait*
Who shunning noisy Pomp and *State*
Those *little* Blessings of the *Great*, (1742)

The March begins in military *State*,
And Nations on his Eye suspended *wait*; (1750)

Condemn'd a needy Supplicant to *wait*,
While Ladies interpose, and Slaves *debate*. (1750)

Do you the neighb'ring blameless Indian *aid*,
Culture what he neglects, not His *invade*; (1752)

The virtuous Soul pursues a nobler *Aim*,
And Life regards but as a fleeting *Dream*. (1752)

Good Sense and Learning may Esteem *obtain*,
Humour and Wit a Laugh, if rightly *ta'en*; (1757)

This last example is indicative of Franklin's ability to code-switch between variant pronunciations to create a rhyme, in this case [əb'tɛ:n] ~ [tɛ:n] or perhaps [əb'tɛin] ~ [tɛin ~ 'tɛ-ən], rather than ['tɛ:kən]. Recall that, based on Orbeck's findings, many speakers still pronounced *Wait* words [ei] during the 17th century and, as we have seen [æi]. Nevertheless, *aim* ~ *dream*, *wait* ~ *debate*, *aid* ~ *invade*, etc. argue in favour of a monophthong [ɛ:] here for reasons of register.

Franklin, when it suited him, rhymes a significant number of <ey>, <ei>, <ay> and <ai> spellings with each other, which might imply [ei] in this context.

Ere the Foundations of the World were *laid*,
Ere kindling Light th'Almighty Word *obey'd* (1751)

Because they had no Saint to hand their *Pray'rs*,
And in Heav'n's Court take Care of their *Affairs*. (1735)

Loos'd from their Friendly Harbours, once *again*,
Our floating Forts assemble on the *Main*; (1742)

Thus he who'd please all, and their Good liking *gain*,
Shows a deal Good Nature, but labours in *vain*. (1737)

It is likely that *prayers* ~ *affairs* were pronounced [ʔjəɹz ~ ʔɛ:əɹz] or [ʔæjəɹz ~ ʔæ:əɹz] here. His reversion back to the older diphthongal realizations here must be envisaged as a possibility: both with [ɛiəɹ] or *again* ~ *main* and *gain* ~ *vain* also with [ɛi], as the last two are pronounced in GA today.

Support for this comes from Coles (1674-1676) who gives *vein*, *feign*, *heinous* with both [ɛi] and [ɛ:] as possible pronunciations and, in one of his earliest *Poor Richard's Almanack* poems (1733), Franklin rhymes *vein* and *again*, which also could be interpreted as being either [vɛ:n] and [ə'gɛ:n] or [vein] ~ [ə'gɛin].

Quoth she, since you are in this wrangling *vein*,
Here take your Kisses, give me mine *again*. (1733)

Dwight matches *agen* ~ *sin*, however. The question in this case is whether *agen* was really pronounced [ə'gɛn] or [ə'gɪn], a pronunciation appearing in both Orbeck *against* [ə'gɪnst] (Watertown records, 1672) and in Lowell's *Biglow Papers* (1848), where he gives *agin* [ə'gɪn] for “again” (but, in which case, why would he have spelt it *agen*?). “Against” is also recorded in the Massachusetts town records as *agaynst* [a'gæɪnst ~ a'gɛɪnst] (Dedham, 1637); note also *agayne* [a'gæin ~ a'gɛin] for “again” (Dedham, 1637) (cf. ME /ai/ below) providing a strong case in favour of the argument that [ɛi ~ æi] were co-variants. On the other hand, “sin” could have been realized as [sɛn] by some Bostonians, many of whom originated from Suffolk where lowering from [ɪ] > [ɛ] was common (cf. Chapter 16).

On two other occasions, however, Dwight rhymes *pain* and *again*, showing that *again* is pronounced [ə'gɛ:n] or perhaps [ə'gɛin], in which case the rhyme with *pain* would be perfect, [pɛ:n] or [pein]. If so, this would provide further evidence that the poets were playing with variant pronunciations [ə'gɛ:n], [ə'gɛin] or [ə'gɪn], as it suited them. Consider [sɛid] vs [sɛd] above where, matched with married [ˈmæɹi.ɛd], [sɛd] was the only possibility.

1.2.2 <air> ~ <ar>

The Watertown town records (Mass.) have 1648 *Bairsto* for “Barstow” where <ai> represents either [ˈbɛ(:).ɪstə ~ ˈbæ(:).ɪstə] with lowering of [ɛ] > [æ] or perhaps, [ˈbæi.ɪstə]). By the end of the 18th century, the most likely pronunciations for <air> words were either [ɛ:ɹ] or [æ:ɹ], rhymes which appear frequently in the poems of the 18th-century American poets. We have seen that Barlow (1754-1812) rhymes the following pairs of words: *air* [æ:ɹ] ~ *star* [stæ:ɹ], *hair* [hæ:ɹ] ~ *tar* [tæ:ɹ], *war* [wæ:ɹ] ~ *air* [æ:ɹ], *alarming* [əˈlæ:ɹmɪn] ~ *chairman* [ˈtʃæ:ɹmɪn] which

appear to eliminate the diphthongal pronunciations suggested earlier, at least in these cases. These [æ:ɪ ~ ε:ɪ] variables are seen in *air* [æ:ɪ ~ ε:ɪ] ~ *care* [kæ:ɪ ~ kε:ɪ], *are* [æ:ɪ ~ ε:ɪ] ~ *fair* [fæ:ɪ ~ fε:ɪ] while Dwight (1752-1817) also rhymes *war* [wæ:ɪ] ~ *air* [æ:ɪ] ~ *despair* [æ:ɪ]. Recall Willard's displeasure with the [kæ:ɪ] pronunciation, which he found "particularly unpleasant" with its "flat" vowel of "care" pronounced like "can" and "carry" (Willard, 1828, 1840).

Alarming [ə'læɪmɪn] ~ *chairman* ['tʃæɪmɪn] is a particularly interesting combination for two reasons. First, we see that <-ing> is reduced to [ɪn] suggesting that, in a disparitary poem of this kind, the reduced form was acceptable to him. This implies it was very common in paritary conversation. Secondly, and of equal significance, the rhyme absolutely required chairman to be pronounced [tʃæ:ɪmɪn] and not [tʃε:ɪmɪn] as we might have expected here

Further proof of this comes from Barlow's *Columbiad* (1807) in which he rhymes *hair* [hæ:ɪ] ~ *tar* [tæ:ɪ], *are* [æ:ɪ]⁵ ~ *fair* [fæ:ɪ], *air* [æ:ɪ] ~ *care* [kæ:ɪ] and, as seen in Chapter 19, *war* [wæ:ɪ] with *air* [æ:ɪ]. Again, it is unlikely that *war* is realized as [wε:ɪ] here, although it cannot be entirely ruled out.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to know the precise value he gave them here, but I would lean in favour of [æ:ɪ]. Recall Grandgent who cites Willard's description of "care" (as the first element of the RP/GA /aʊ/ diphthong of *cow*) as being pronounced with the "flat sound of [æ]" (cf. *Mouth* diphthong in Chapter 20), realized in the same way as "can" and "carry" and "drawn out to a greater length or duration" (Grandgent, 1899, 228). As we have pointed out in previous chapters (cf. Hall, 1942), the [æɪ] realization has been retained in the southern Appalachians where it is still quite widespread to this day. However, we must not forget Krapp's contention that both [æ] and [ε] were possible in 18th-century New England English. Franklin gives many examples of this kind. Here, the dominant pronunciation appears to be [æ:ɪ] with occasional lapses back to [ε:ɪ]. Spanning the paritary and disparitary registers, the phonetic range at this time appears to have resembled [ε(j)əɪ ~ æ(j)əɪ ~ ε:ɪ ~ æ:ɪ].

Bright as the day and as the morning *fair*,
Such Cloe is, and common as the *air*. (1742)

Do not the Mason's Toil and *Care*
Protect him from th' inclement *Air*? (1741)

Happy the Man whose Wish and *Care*
A few paternal Acres bound,
Content to breathe his native *Air*, (1743)

Aspasia's Shape indeed—but then her *Air*,
'Twould ask a Conj'rer to find Beauty *there*." (1750)

5 Franklin transcribes as *er* in his "Reformed Mode of Spelling" (cf. Chapters 22-24).

With private Views, thy Friend may promise *fair*,
And Servants very seldom prove *sincere*. (1749)

130 Your distant Prospects all precarious *are*,
And Fortune is as fickle as she's *fair*. (1749)

'Tis not the Face with a delightful *Air*,
A rosy Cheek and lovely flowing *Hair*; (1735)

In all of these examples, [æ:ɪ] appears to be likely, with the possible exception of *fair* ~ *sincere*. Was *sincere* really pronounced here as [sm'sæ:ɪ] rather than [sm'sɛ:ɪ]?

To conclude, the <air> spelling during the early 17th century may have resembled the following “phonetic range”: [æjə ~ æ:ɪ] which later fell together with [ɛjə ~ ɛ:ɪ] with the latter becoming dominant and being finally adopted in contemporary GA. Again, variations of this <air> [æ:ɪ] pronunciation were probably quite common throughout early America, both in the North and South.

Spellings of “ear(s)” recorded in the Hempstead records (NY) appear to be examples of the same phenomenon occurring with words originating from ME /ɛ:/: *aears*, possibly [æ:ɪz ~ ɛ:ɪz] (1665), *ayer* [ʔæjəɪ ~ ʔɛjəɪ] (1666) and *eyer* [ʔɛjəɪ ~ ʔɛjəɪ] (1695) with these examples exhibiting early signs of breaking. It may be this kind of feature that both Franklin and Webster appear to have considered to be “drawling” which they describe as typical of the New Englanders and which they also vehemently condemn (cf. Chapter 14). This characteristic was obviously common throughout the colonies at one point.

1.3 ME oi and ME ui

In RP and GA, all but two ME diphthongs evolved into monophthongs in the Early Modern era, namely, ME /oi/ [qi ~ ɔi] and ME /ui/. Furthermore, the words in which these diphthongs appeared were of Old French or Anglo-Norman origin. Dobson (1968, 798-804) points out that many words were confused and spelt with <ui> or <oi> in words such as *anoint*, *ointment*, *assoil*, *boil* (vb), *coil*, *coin*, *destroy*, *join*, *joint*, *jointure*, *loin*, *moist*, *point*, *poison*, *purloin*, *soil*, *spoil*, *toil*, *turmoil* and *voice* and concludes that [ui] and [qi] were in free variation. Dobson (ibid., 810) asserts that many words which originated from ME /ui/ were spelt “oy” and that this led literate speakers to modify their pronunciation to the exclusion of ME /ui/ (e.g. OF *bouillir* > boil). Nevertheless, he stresses that the modern [ɔɪ] pronunciation “is not a mere spelling-pronunciation; it represents the survival, assisted by the spelling, of one of the 16th and 17th century variants to the exclusion of the other, even in words in which ME /ui/ was formerly much the more common.” He adds a very precise account of these changes.

In general the evidence is that in good St E speech [ɔi] was retained until about 1640, that [Δi] was then used for a time, and that [əi] was used from at the latest 1685; *in rather less correct speech [əi] was in use from at latest about 1640* (my italics); and in some forms of speech, if the evidence of spellings is to be relied on (cf. Note 2 below), [əi] occurred as early as the 15th century. (Ibid.)

It is interesting that Dobson should date the development of [əi] so late. It is precisely in 1644 that Lass (1999) points out that Hodges (1644) describes the first occurrence of *Price* words being pronounced [əi]. We shall see in all of Franklin, Dwight and Barlow's poems, the matches between *Price* and *Choice* words are pronounced [əi]. Other combinations are with [ei] and, by the 19th century, [ai] in American and southern English English. As Dobson suggests, however, [ɔi] must have been a variable as well.

Görlach (2012, 596-597) clarifies my last point by specifying that:

in a transitional phase, some members of the /ui/ group apparently merged with the reflexes of ME /i:/, when the latter reached the /əi ~ Δi/ stage. Thus, *loin* : *line* and *point* : *pint* became homophones. This realization was however stigmatized as a provincialism and given up in favor of /ɔi/ in the 19th century.

The question to ask, however, is what explains the variation [əi], [Δi], [ɔi], [ɔi], [ai], [æi], [ei] throughout England itself? Lass summarizes the data as follows: Hart (1569) realizes *joy* and *choice* as [ɔi] and *join* and *poison* as [ui]. Hodges (1644) has two realizations: [ɔi] (*boy, choice, joy, noise*) and [ei] (*boil, broil, coin, loin, point, toil*). Wallis has [ɔi] for *boys, toys, noise* and [əi] or [ɔi] in *boil, oil, toil*. Finally, Cooper has [Δi] for most <oi> words (except *jointure, oil, toil, poison, point*) (Lass, 1999, 102-103). Regarding this last point, considering Mazarin's convincing analysis of Wilkins and Cooper's realization of *Price* words being realized as [ɹi] (Chapter 16), their *Choice* words may also have been [ɹi] by this time. As we can see the differences in pronunciation among orthoepists themselves is striking and one can only imagine what the situation was like throughout rural England at the time.

To recapitulate, [ui] was lowered and merged with [ɔi] and, from this point, depending on the dialect, [ɔi] was progressively lowered to [ɔi], then to [ɔi], centralized to [ɹi] > [Δi] > [əi] and fronted to [ei] > [ai] where it was finally raised to [æi] and [ei]. The latter were the most evolved and can still be heard in Lancashire today (cf. below).

Many Americans still pronounce the *Choice* diphthong it [ɔi ~ ɔi] today which, in the scheme of things, appears far older than some of the contemporary dialect treatments. Nevertheless, this older /ui/ pronunciation survived in a number of dialect words in places like Somerset, where Orbeck offers another string of examples of "appointment" with <wi>, suggesting the older [ui] pronunciation (cf. Dobson's explanation for ME /ui/ above). This interpretation of the onset

<w> being vocalic [u] is given added strength when we consider that it was indeed described as being pronounced <oo> by both Franklin and Webster, as in a scattering of Modern English dialects today (Wright, 1988, 1905) (cf. Chapters 26 AND 27). Orbeck's examples are: *apwinted* [æ'puintəd] (Watertown, 1672) and *apwintted* (Watertown, 1673) "appointed," *apwinting* for "appointing" (Watertown, 1674), *appwint* (Watertown, 1674), *apwointed* (Watertown, 1678) and thus are likely to represent the older [ui] pronunciation in this word.⁶ Orbeck stresses that all of these last examples are "by the same scribe" and "reflect a labialization." He quotes Wyld (1915), who quotes the form *apwoynted* from the Cely Papers, "which reflects Essex speech in the latter part of the fifteenth century." He adds that the scribe responsible for these forms in the Watertown records came with his parents from Essex as a young boy. Another example from the same source is *booyes* [buiz ~ bɔiz] for "boys" (Watertown, 1673) (Orbeck, 1927, 58). These examples seem to point to a merger of ME /oi/ and ME /ui/ with the latter becoming the dominant form in some varieties. Alicia Leith (1895) systematically spells "boy" as *bwy*, presumably [bwi ~ bui].

Orbeck (1927, 58) also gives examples such as *aging* "adjoining" (Groton, 1683), *pint* "point" (Plymouth, 1698), *apinted* "appointed" (Plymouth, 1701), *imply* "employ" (Groton, 1698), *implied* "employed" (Watertown, 1673), *implyment* "employment" (Plymouth, 1666) which he interprets as being [əi]. He gives the same value to orthographic <i> of *Price* words. We cannot be so certain of the exact value of <i> or <y> here, but it would appear to be close to [əi] or even [əi].

Given that Franklin's rhymes involving stressed and unstressed final -ly and -y also have a value of [əi ~ ɪi?] (cf. Chapter 17 for examples as well as in his RMS in Chapter 27), the most likely pronunciation, or at least the most common one, was probably [əi] by the end of the 18th century, although [ei] pronunciations may also have been heard (cf. John Hart).

A trace of this might be seen in Shorrocks (1998, 265) who provides interesting contemporary evidence for Lancashire, where ME /ɔi/ is pronounced [ei] and may represent one of the more evolved types I proposed above: *oil* [eiəl], *joiner* ['dʒɛɪnə], *noise* [neiɪz], *poison* ['peɪzən], *soil* [seiəl], *boil* [beɪəl], *boy* [beɪ], *join* [dʒɛɪn], etc. Burton (2010, 107) gives [næɪz] for "noise" and [væɪs] for "voice" for Dorset. A similar pronunciation may lurk behind Orbeck's *apaintment* [æ'peɪntmənt ~ æ'pæɪntmənt?] for "appointment" (Groton, 1664). This particular treatment seems to demonstrate that [ei] > [æi] evolved out of [ai] possibly from an older [əi], that is, in the same manner as *Price* words. To summarize, the four main spellings of the 17th-century Massachusetts clerks are <wi>, <oo>, <i> and <y> corresponding to the following possible phonetic ranges:

6 Recall that Franklin's maternal grandparents arrived in Watertown from their native Norfolk in 1635.

- a. <i> and <y> spellings: [əi ~ ɪi] perhaps in competition with [ɛi ~ æi ~ ai]
- b. <ay> spellings: [ɛi ~ æi ~ ai]
- c. <wi> and <ooy> spellings: [ui ~ ɔi ~ ɪi]
- d. <oy> [ɔi ~ ɔi ~ ɔi ~ ɪi]

ME /ui/ and /ɔi/ may have developed along these lines with the /ui/ falling together with /ɔi/ at an early date. The passage followed in a) shows centralization to [ɛi] or lowering [ɔi] once the [ɔi] stage was reached. The shift from [ɔi] to [ɛi] would have been a natural and easy one and from that point on, the onset vowels of these diphthongs were gradually fronted after the [ɛi] > [æi] stage was reached.

The process seen in b) shows considerable innovation ending with [æi], which could still be heard in 19th-century Dorset and [ɛi], can be heard in contemporary Lancashire.

- a) [ui] > [ɔi] > [ɔi] > [ɔi] > [ɔi]



- b) [ui] > [ɪi] > [ɪi] > [ɛi] > [æi] > [æi] > [ai] > [æi] > [ɛi].

Along this journey the *Choice* diphthong melded (and was confused) with the downward drift of *Price* words. Variants such as these, in differing combinations, were all part of the North American feature pool in each of the colonies. The course of development shown in a) corresponds to contemporary GA with [ɔi] and [ɔi] pronunciations common today. The course followed by b) shows very early centralization starting with [ui] with the onset vowel following a clean linear downward movement via [ɪi] > [ɛi]. We see that [ɛi] could have stemmed from either a centralization of [ɔi] or a downward shift from [ɪi] to [ɛi]. From there, the fronting process would have been natural.

It is important to point out that, once the [ɪi ~ ɛi ~ əi] stage had been reached, *Choice* words and *Price* words developed in tandem in many varieties and essentially merged, thus permitting the rhymes we are about to study. This part of my analysis corresponds quite well to what Görlach (2012, 596-597) explains above. Traces of the more evolved [ai] realization are still heard today in the Outer Banks and in Appalachia (Schneider-Estes & Wolfram, 1997; Hall 1942). [ai] was also the pronunciation heard in 19th-century New England, perhaps alongside [əi].

Figure 23.1 puts the complex picture just drawn here into a better perspective and hopefully offers the reader a clearer interdialectal view of sound changes over time as well as of patterns of development. This presentation should be considered in tandem with those of *Price* words in particular, Figure 16.1

(Chapter 16), but also *Mouth* words, Figure 20.1 (Chapter 20). The diphthongs that are highlighted in bold type below show areas of overlap with the development of *Price* words pinpointing areas of confusion and thus identifying the possible variant pronunciations in rhymes such as *tile* ~ *toil*. The outline also suggests a possible chronological outline for the development of a number of key pronunciations, for instance, the fact that [ai ~ æi ~ ei] rhymes of *Price* and *Choice* words tend to appear during the 19th century (possibly earlier in the 18th century) but not in the 17th century.

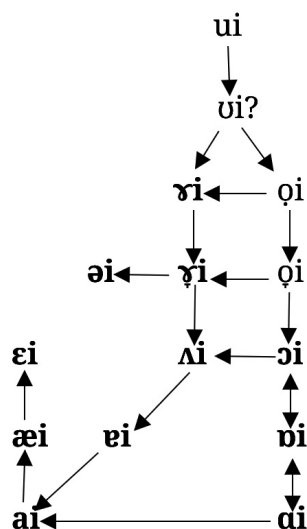


Fig. 23.1 ME /ui/ and /oi/, possible patterns of interdialectal development: 1450-1800. Bold type indicates areas of possible overlap with *Price* words; arrows indicate possible paths of development, hence chronological diffusion.

As we shall now see, I believe that Franklin pronounced this diphthong [əi ~ ɹi] in his natural idiom and, it would appear that, in 18th-century England and in Massachusetts, the latter realization was considered more socially appropriate. For this reason, the evidence given by all of the New England poets, including Franklin, reflects a merger between *Price* and *Choice* words which I take to have been reached at the [ɹi ~ Δi ~ əi] stage.

1.3.1 New England Poets

We saw Chapter 16 that Dobson insists that the general pronunciation of ME /i:/ of *Price* words was [əi] as early as Swrdwal's "Hymn to the Virgin" even though the Welsh poet renders ME /i:/ with <ei> and which, on the basis of historical

Welsh phonology, I interpreted to be [ei] in Welsh orthography of the time (German, 1996; 2000a, 2000b, 2007). Lass (1999, 81) emphatically stated that Dobson was wrong on this point and cites Hodges (1644) as the first orthoepist to give a clear description of the [əi] diphthong.

For Massachusetts, I allowed for dialectal phonetic range of [əi ~ ɤi ~ ai ~ æi ~ ei ~ ɔi?] variants which were all part of the feature pool initially. By the middle of the 18th century, I believe that [əi] had become dominant among educated speakers like Franklin. In his *Reformed Mode of Spelling*, Franklin presents ME /i:/ with his character < **y** > + < **i** > which, as we shall see again in Chapter 27, probably represents [ɤi ~ əi] in his idiolect. I have proposed that this is almost certainly a reflexion of his natural pronunciation. Whether he was able to imitate London /Δi/ is another matter. I proposed in Chapter 16 that his *Price* **yi** diphthong represents London /Δi/ phonemically in his and Stevenson's RMS transcriptions. Franklin was certainly familiar with many of the variants indicated including [ɔi] for both *Price* and *Choice* words (more on this in Part IV).

Kenrick presents an interesting description of ME /ui ~ ɔi/ in his 1773 dictionary, writing:

A vicious custom indeed prevails, in common conversation, of sinking the first broad sound intirely [sic], or rather converting both into the sound of i or y, marked No. XXVI. In the Alphabet, and XVI in the Dictionary: this *oil*, *toil*, are frequently pronounced exactly like *isle*, *tile*. This is a fault which the Poets are inexcusable for promoting, by making such words rhyme to each other. And yet there are some words so written, which by long use, have almost lost their true sound, such are *boil*, *join*, and many others; which it would now appear affectation to pronounce otherwise than *bile*, *jine*. We find, indeed, that this mode of pronunciation becomes every day more general; a striking proof, among others, of the antipathy, if I may so call it, of speech to the use of diphthongs... The English frequently mistake in thinking the *moi*, *foi*, etc. of the French have this sound. It is not so. In the first part indeed there is a similitude, but the last is much clearer and tonous in English than in French. (Kenrick, 1773, 39)

We have seen previously that Kenrick described i or y as being pronounced [ɛ:i ~ ɤ:i] (p. 24) and/or [ai ~ æi?] (p. 41). My feeling is that, in his mind, the “faulty” realization of *oil* and *tile*, *boil* and *join* is perhaps due to his misunderstanding of the French pronunciation of *moi*, *foi* which he seems to be interpreting as [ɔi] rather than [mwɛ] and [fwɛ] as it was pronounced in 18th-century France (i.e. the disparitary pronunciation used by Louis XV and XVI). Modern French [mwa] and [fwa] was associated with the vulgar pronunciation of the bourgeois class which, after the Revolution, came to dominate among the intelligentsia. In fact, Seguin (1972, 38) points out that in 1700 *moi* [mwa] and *foi* [fwa] had not yet been attested. Be that as it may, Kenrick might actually be advocating [ei ~ æi

~ ai]... which is in fact what one still hears in places like Lancashire [ɛi] or [ai] Appalachia and the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

Regarding *Choice* words, in the entire RMS corpus of 442 words which I have assembled, Franklin offers only one example, “destroyed,” which he uses twice and spells the same way: **destru~~y~~i**. I explain this in Chapter 27 as a failed attempt to distinguish between his natural pronunciation, which was probably **destru~~y~~i** with [əi ~ ɹi] and what appears to be what he imagined to be a contemporary London pronunciation of the time, that is, **destru~~y~~i**. This hypothesis appears confirmed by Franklin’s rhyme of *destroy* ~ *vanity* (1735), both pronounced [əi ~ ɹi]. By the end of the 18th century, the pronunciation of *Choice* words was indeed veering towards /ɔi ~ ɔi/ (cf. Chapter 27). Unfortunately, however, with only one example to go by, this can only be a conjecture. Having said this, I also pointed out that [ɔi] was until recently the dominant pronunciation of *Price* words in Northamptonshire where his father and older siblings were born.

Franklin’s poems, however, reveal far more about the nature of his Boston diphthong, which confirms what has just been said and conforms quite well with earlier southern and eastern English pronunciations as well as those of the other New England poets. Franklin’s examples are numerous and, in all of the following examples, *Price* words and *Choice* words seem to be pronounced in the area of [əi ~ ɹi].

Beware of meat twice *boil’d*,
and an old foe *reconcil’d*. (1733)

He cannot fawn, his stubborn Soul *recoils*
At Baseness, and his Blood too highly *boils*. (1742)

A smiling Conscience, a contented *mind*;
A temp’rate Knowledge with true Wisdom *join’d*; (1745)

Nor yet when Folly hides the dubious *Line*,
Where Good and Bad their blended Colours *join*; (1746)

What’s Man’s Reward for all his Care and *Toil*?
But *One*; a female Friend’s endearing *Smile*: (1746)

And, not at all, or not aright *employ’d*,
Behold a Length of Years, and all a *Void*? (1750)

As such, Franklin inherited the previously vulgar [əi ~ ɹi] pronunciation of the mid-17th century. Likewise, Barlow, Dwight and Lowell’s rhymes shed considerable light on New England realizations of this diphthong. Dwight, like Franklin, regularly rhymes words originating from ME /i:/ and ME /ui ~ ɔi/: *smile* [smɹil ~ sməil] ~ *toil* [tɹil ~ təil], *oil* [ɹil ~ əil] ~ *toil* [tɹil ~ təil] (cf. Barlow, *Columbiad*).

Supposing that [ɹi] was Franklin’s natural pronunciation of <oi> and of his

Price vowel (like Wilkins and Cooper), [ɹi] would have been very close to the older [ɔi] pronunciation discussed above, still relatively common in the 17th century. The correspondence with the <wi> spellings would be apparent in that case. On the other hand, if Franklin's onset vowel of the *Price* diphthong was realized as [əi], it would have been a hair's breadth away from [ʌi]. Again, many Americans still pronounce it [ɔi] which would appear to reflect an older stage. The most likely phonetic range for educated New Englanders of Franklin's generation would thus have been [ɹi ~ ʔi ~ ʌi ~ əi]. Here I give *Price-Choice* rhymes as Franklin may have pronounced them. For simplicity's sake, I have transcribed all of these examples with [əi].

<i>join ~ line</i>	[dʒəin] ~ [ləin] (3 times)
<i>join'd ~ behind</i>	[dʒəind] ~ [bi'həind]
<i>rejoin'd ~ mankind</i>	[ɹidʒəind] ~ [mæn'kəind]
<i>rejoin'd ~ mind</i>	[ɹi'dʒəind] ~ [məind]
<i>join ~ divine</i>	[dʒəin] ~ [di'vəin] (twice)
<i>join'd ~ humankind</i>	[dʒəind] ~ [h(j)umən'kəind]
<i>join ~ combine</i>	[dʒəin] ~ [kəm'bəin]
<i>join ~ Rhine</i>	[dʒəin] ~ [ɹəin]
<i>toil ~ smile</i>	[təil] ~ [sməil]...

One must stop to consider the fact that [ɛi] was the dominant pronunciation of *Price* words in southern England during the 17th century (Lass, 1999) and that this pronunciation was certainly very present, if not dominant, in 17th-century Massachusetts. Therefore, in all of the examples cited above, [əi] even more innovative [ɛi] pronunciations must have been common in less sophisticated circles. Recall that [əi] was the most common pronunciation of the *Price* vowel in 19th-century Massachusetts and the lowered [ai] variant associated with GA today was common in the towns of Massachusetts (Grandgent, 1899). The passage from [əi] to [ai] would have been natural. To repeat, the development of *Choice* diphthongs appears to have been opposite to that of *Price* words, that is: [ɹi] or [ɔi] > [ʌi] / > [ɛi] > [ai] > [əi] > [ɛi].

Orbeck (1927, 58-59) offers several spellings of “joint” *joyent* (Plymouth, 1694) for which “the first element is almost certainly a back vowel,” but also *iants* “joints” (Groton, 1706) for which he believes “the diphthong may have been reduced to a front vowel” ([iænt?] or rather [æint?] ~ iənt]), while *joantly*, “jointly” (Groton, 1690), may “reflect a simplification under a back vowel” [dʒæ(i)ntli ~ dʒɛ(i)ntli]. This is not particularly helpful, but it does exemplify

the difficulty of the task of deciphering these spellings.

In his *Biglow Papers* (1848), Lowell offers clear evidence that these words were pronounced in the Boston area as either [æi] or, perhaps more likely, [ai] by 1848. He spells all the concerned words as if they were from ME /i:/ and this strategy may be based on a primitive Massachusetts spelling tradition of which Lowell was probably aware, that is, similar to the example cited by Orbeck above: *aging* “adjoining” (Groton, 1683), *pint* “point” (Plymouth, 1698), *apinted* “appointed” (Plymouth, 1701), *imply* “employ” (Groton, 1698). Lowell’s examples are as follows:

<i>briles</i>	“broils”	[bɹæilz ~ bɹailz]
<i>pints</i>	“points”	[pæints ~ paints]
<i>spile</i>	“spoil”	[spæil ~ spail]
<i>jint</i>	“joint”	[dʒæint ~ dʒaint]
<i>abrilin’</i>	“a-broiling”	[əbɹæilɪn ~ 'brailɪn]
<i>jine</i>	“join”	[dʒæin ~ dʒain]
<i>bile</i>	“boil”	[bæil ~ bail]
<i>ile</i>	“oil”...	[æil ~ ail]

On this topic, Grandgent (1899: 228) writes:

All lists of words pronounced alike contained such pairs as *bile* *boil*, *engine* *enjoin*, *file* *foil*, *pint* *point*, *tile* *toil*. These we find, without condemnation, as late as 1822. Dearborn, 1795, on the other hand, mentions “bile” and “brile” as “improprieties” and Willard calls “ile, pint, line” for “oil, point, loin,” “very old-fashioned”

Grandgent (1899, 227) adds that “Long i’, in New England, is now generally sounded ai, less frequently ei or æi.” Here this observation might confirm the possibility that [æi] could have been the variant form described by Kenrick beside his [ɛ:i] realisation. According to Grandgent, if one reads between the lines, this implies that *Price* and *Choice* diphthongs could have had variants in late 19th-century New England ranging from [ai ~ æi] on one hand and [ɹai ~ æi] on the other. It appears that, by 1900, the [ɹi] diphthong was a thing of the past.

Finally, during the late 1930s, Hall (1942, 46) collected a number of examples in the Smokies pronounced [ai], saying “A number of people retain the archaic [ai] in *boil* [baɪl], *coil* [kaɪl], *hoist* [haɪst], and *joists* [dʒaɪsts].” Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (1997) document the same pronunciation of *Choice* words for Ocracoke, North Carolina’s Outer Banks.

Whatever one’s conclusion concerning the quality of the onset vowel, it is clear that *Price* and *Choice* vowels had merged, in one form or another, as early as the 17th century.

Interestingly, Alexander Pope (1688-1744), Franklin's contemporary, also gives similar rhymes and it may be to him, among others, that Kenrick (1773, 39) refers with obvious annoyance. However, given his description of *Price* words as [ɛi:] or [æi: ~ ai], one wonders what his precise realization of these rhymes would have been? Given his age, Pope may have realized these words as follows: *joined* [dʒəind] ~ *mankind* [mæn'kəind], *join* [dʒəin] ~ *line* [ləin] and *join* [dʒəin] ~ *divine* [di'vəin] (cf. Alexander Pope's "An Essay on Criticism," 1711, *join* [dʒəin] ~ *nine* [nəin] and "The Rape of the Lock," 1712, for similar rhymes). Here again, [ɛi] and [æi ~ ai] could have been part of the phonetic range here. This demonstrates that the New Englanders and a similar class of English poets shared the same kinds of pronunciations of this diphthong, whatever their precise realization (cf. Chapter 27 for further discussion on this matter).

1.4 ME *eu* and *iu* (*Blue, Dew, Nephew, Tuesday...*)

Görlach (2012, 597) provides a useful summary of the Middle English diphthongs *ew*, realized as /eu/ (in words like *beauty, dew, few, hew*) and /iu/ (in words like *chew, due, new, true*). Much of his account revolves around the dating of the merger of the two diphthongs and the transformation of the onset into a glide [ju:]. The process by which this occurred was accomplished by raising [eu] to [iu] and the lengthening of the second element from [ʊ] to [u:]. He cites Schüter (2006) with whom he concurs and Dobson (1968, 700-713, 798-799) who concludes that ME /eu/ and /iu/ merged to become [iu:] at some point during the 16th century. Of course, for the two to have merged the <eu> would have had to have a high-mid onset vowel similar to French [ɛ] (é). The passage to [iu] would have then been quite natural.

Note, however, that the New England records appear to show conservative pronunciations of this diphthong in the 17th century: *iseue* ['isɛu] (Dedham, 1696), *valewe* ['vælɛu] (Dedham, 1638), *vallew* ['vælɛu] (Dedham, 1662), *valewed* ['vælɛud] (Dedham, 1636), *valewably* ['vælɛuəbli] (Dedham, 1637). *Continew* [kɒn'tɪnɛu(:)] (Dedham, 1660), *Jenewary* ['dʒɛnɛ'wɛɪ ~ 'dʒɛnɛ'wɛɪ] (Dedham, 1661) (Orbeck, 1927, 60).

Citing Dobson again, Görlach (ibid.) writes that "the development of the glide began as early as the late 16th century, while the loss of the distinction between /eu/ and /iu/ proceeded slowly south- and westwards and was completed in the standard by the last third of the 17th century."

However, Görlach states that Schüter argues that the glide appears as early as the late 17th century in the reflexes of ME /iu/ words (> [ju:]), and believes that reflexes of ME /eu/ continued to be pronounced [iu:] until the late 18th century when it too begins to transition to [ju:]. This later date seems possible, however, although the glide is absent in many positions in New England (cf. discussion

of palatalization below), Franklin transcribes “few” and “pure” as *fiu* and *piur* in his RMS (cf. Chapter 27) and also *iuzd* for “used,” *ius*, etc. This is clearly a holdover of the older pronunciation. However, he omits palatal glide [j] or glide vowels after /t/, /d/, /n/.

Interestingly, the [ɹu] pronunciation can still be heard today in modern Welsh English as [ɹu]: *Tuesday* [ˈtɹuzdɛ], *tune* [tɹʊn] *dew* [dɹu], *blew* [blɹu] vs *blue* [blu:]... (cf. Parry, 1977, 1979, 1999, 2003, 12-13). Although this pronunciation is often explained as a Welsh substratal influence in the English of Wales (i.e. the glides [j] and [w] are absent from the Early Modern inventory), it could also be the result of multi-causation, that is, a natural Welsh-language feature combined with an older English dialectal realization. We have already considered similar cases where certain features of AAVE may have dual West African creole and EME origins (e.g. habitual *Be* and periphrastic *Do*, German, 2006). Nevertheless, Parry (2003, 13) continues, stating that “In *blue*, *nephew*, *dew*, *ewe*, *suet*, /ɹu(:)/ forms are very rare in the SED recordings for Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, and likewise in the *Index* to the EDG.”

We shall see in Chapters 25, 26 and 27 that Franklin transcribes “you” as *iu* and this very probably reflects his genuine pronunciation and not, as I had thought initially, an overly systematic application of a rule which would have included a [ju:] variant. Put another way, although [ju:] was certainly gaining ground at the expense of [ɹu ~ ru], it was still stigmatized in certain circles where polite speakers preferred the older diphthongal [iu ~ ru] version. We shall see the same tendency is clearly in play for orthographic <w>, (Franklin’s RMS equivalent is *u*) which also had a marked vocalic quality (Chapters 25, 26, 28).

Görlach (2012, 597-598) explains that [j] disappeared early after /r/, /dʒ/ and /tʃ/ in words such as *rude*, *June* and *chew* and, in the 18th century, it was lost after /l/ and /s/ (*clue*, *suit*). Nevertheless, here too it has been preserved in Welsh English. He then contends that its loss after /t/, /d/ and /n/ in *tube*, *due* and *new* is a recent American phenomenon. It most certainly is not.

Görlach’s observation is inaccurate on two grounds. The first is that the loss of the glide in North America is associated mainly with New England not with the middle and southern colonies where [tj], [dj], [nj] realizations are largely conserved. Webster (1789) and Duponceau (1818) referred specifically to Virginia, where it has survived. Such observations prove, once again, that several identifiable North American koines had already been recognisable as early as the beginning of the 18th century (cf. Chapters 11, 12, 14).

The loss of palatalization after /t/, /d/, /n/ is pertinent to our story because the glide is also lost in the same environments in the London area, most notably in pockets of East Anglia where a large contingent of the Puritan immigrants originated and a large area south and east of London with a later group from the Southwest, where one observes [tu-] for *Tuesday* (and [bu-] for *beautiful* and

[du-] for *dew*; cf. Upton & Widdowson, 1996, map 24, p. 48; map 25, p. 50). Note, however, that Dobson (1968, 712) emphasizes the [ɪu] realization: “That the “normal pronunciation in London was always [ɪu] there can be no doubt.” The local dialectal picture was doubtlessly more complicated and [tu-] was clearly widespread, around London but large pockets of Sussex and all of Devon. We shall that both Stevenson, a native of Kensington, and Franklin transcribed “new” as [nu], not [nɪu] or [nju].

The Dedham town records offer an example showing an *iu* realization of “going” as *giuin* [ˈɡɪuːm] (1656) that looks very much like the [ke-]/[kj-] pronunciations of “cow,” *keow*, which Franklin condemned so vehemently in his 1739 issue of *Poor Richard’s Almanack*. “Going” may have developed a [gj-] glide on the model of words like “gate” ([gjet ~ gjeːt] “gate,” etc.).

As mentioned above, the fact that Modern English dialects (including areas to the south and northeast of London) and New England share the [tu-], [du-] and [nu-] pronunciation implies to me that the loss of the glide in these environments occurred at a time preceding the settlement of New England. If so, the source is plainly English and not American. We shall see that both Franklin and, more importantly, Polly Stevenson of Kensington, London, both transcribe “new” as **nu** in his *Reformed Mode of Spelling*.

The loss of palatalization thus appears to have been a common feature in 17th-century English when occurring medially, as can be seen from spellings of *nater*, *figer* and *picter* in Dryden and Pope for “nature,” “figure” and “picture” (Bowen, 1905). This will be examined further in section 2.5.1 below, as well as in Chapter 27.

1.5 ME /au/

Dobson (1968, 782-783) summarizes the development of ME /au/ very succinctly as follows: “ME *au* shows two developments in ModE. In its free development it is monophthongized to [ɔ:]. Before certain consonants, however, there is also monophthongization to [a:] > [ɑ:].”

Interesting for our purposes is Dobson’s claim that diphthongization was prevalent in careful speech during the 16th century and survived in a few words in conservative speech until the 17th century. He cites the French orthoepist Bellot (1586) who also gives diphthongal evidence in English (cited in Zachrisson). Dobson (1968, 783) believes it was probably pronounced [au ~ ɔu] and gives examples of this diphthongal pronunciation provided by Wilkins (*awe* and *yaw*) which he transcribes as [ɔu]. He adds that Cooper (1685) gives [ɔu] in fifteen learned words and appears to be the last English orthoepist to do so (*ibid.*, 786). We shall return to this below.

As mentioned above (cf. diphthongization of ME *a* and ME *o* before <l> and

<gh>), ME /au/ was pronounced [au] and variants thereof in the 17th century had become monophthongal [ɔ:] as early as the 16th century (ibid.). Although the diphthongal pronunciation subsisted well into the 17th century, the general opinion among historical linguists is that, by 1650, the tendency among “polite” speakers was to pronounce it as monophthongal [ɔ:] and this probably was also the case in New England. Notice that this is the only environment in which Franklin doubles his already doubled *aa* character, presumably [ɔ: ~ ɑ:].

In Chapter 19, Sequence 2, we saw that there were several treatments of words such as *calf*, *half* and *salve* that originally would have had an /au/ diphthong. For instance, we saw spellings of “calves” in the Hempstead records of New York as *caulfes* (1660) and *haulf* (1661) which may reflect the older diphthong, that is, resulting from the vocalization of the velar [ɣ]. He goes on to state that the loss of this [ɣ] in *half* is not recorded before the late 16th century. Comparative evidence from the West of England (Wells, 1989), Tangier Island in the Chesapeake Bay (Shores, 1984) and Bolton, Lancs. (Shorrocks, 1998), indicates that /l/ was conserved in a number of varieties, particularly before /-m/.

Dobson (1968, 791) also challenges the commonly held view that the dominant pronunciation of *dance* was [dæ:ns] in the 17th century and cites evidence that it was in fact [da:ns]. For him, [æ:] is a secondary development which he explains on the grounds that it is unlikely that the monophthongization of the [au] diphthong would have gone directly [æ] without first passing through an [a] or even an [ɔ] stage. The two developments were towards [ɔ:] on one hand and towards [æ:] on the other. Still, given that words such as “dance,” “France,” etc. are pronounced [ã] in French and were borrowed into English, presumably via the Southeast, it stands to sense that this [ã:] variable would have existed in English from the very beginning. To complicate matters, French also had the [ɛ:] variable which still can be heard in the regional dialects of France.

Dobson (ibid., 794) interprets words such as *haunt*, *taunt*, *vaunt*, *launch* (Strong, 1676) *haunch* (Brown, 1700) to have been pronounced by them as either [a:] or [æ:] and, two-hundred and fifty years later, this is precisely the pronunciation that is given by Hall (1942, 24, 33) in the Smokies for this category of word (but with breaking): *daunt* [dæent], *sauce* [sæs], *saucer* [sæsə], *haunt* [hæent], *jaundice* [dʒændəz], *yellow jaundice* [jælə dʒændəs] but also *daughter* [dætə]. Here again, the signs are that this was the general pronunciation during the 17th and 18th centuries across the colonies. We have seen that common American words such as “sassy” and “to sass,” as in “Don’t sass me!”, are originally from “saucy” and “sauce.” Notice that all these words, except “daughter,” are of French origin. We have also seen *soft* recorded with [æ] by both Shorrocks (1998) and Hall (1942) (cf. Webster and Nares’ treatment of <aw> and <au> in Chapter 26).

1.5.1 ME /a/ + /x/ and ME o /ɔ/ + /x/

It is generally accepted that ME *aht* and ME *oht* would have fallen together as [ɒu(x)] represented in traditional spelling as *aught* and *ought*.

It is probable that the move towards monophthongization is linked to the second element of the diphthong, having been lowered to [ɔ] as the result of vowel assimilation giving variants of [ɒɔ] in some dialects. Modern diphthongal pronunciation in Appalachian English may be a relic of this feature and, if so, it was most likely shared by speakers in broader areas of colonial 17th- and 18th-century America.

OE [ax] > ME [aux] > [aʊx] > [ɒux]/[ɒox] > [ɒɔ] > 18th c. [ɒ: ~ ɑ:] > GA [ɒ: ~ ɑ:] & RP [ɔ:]

OE [ox] > ME [oux] > [ɒux]/[ɒox] > [ɒɔ] > 18th c. [ɒ: ~ ɑ:] > GA [ɒ: ~ ɑ:] & RP [ɔ:]

In words such as “daughter” < OE *dohter*, “laugh” < OE *læhhan*, “through” < OE *thruh*, “fought” < OE *fohten*, “taught” < OE *tohte*, “tough” < OE *toh*, “rough” < OE *ruh*, “bought” < OE *bohte*, “thought” < OE *thoht*, *gethoht*, “sought” < OE *sohte*, etc., the “current” <ou> our modern orthography, *aught/ought*, therefore reflects the late 15th-century pronunciation that was probably shared by Caxton. Dobson points out that diphthongization occurred following the introduction of a [ʊ] glide which had developed before postvocalic [x] from the early 13th century onward (Dobson, 1968, 579; see below for the possible retention of this diphthong in modern varieties). He cites the majority of orthoepists, including Hart (1551), Bullokar (1580) and Gil (1619), who record ME *oht* as being pronounced with [au] (ibid., 795).

ME /x/ was retained by Smith (1542), Hart (1551), Bullokar (1581), Gil (1619), Jonson (1640) and Newton (1661), with occasional loss in Smith and Bullokar (Dobson, 1968, 986). Smith (1542), originally from Essex, and Bullokar (1581), from Sussex, signal its presence while Coote (1596), a Sussex schoolmaster, writes that <gh> is “but little sounded” by “most men” in final position in *plough*, *slough* and *bough* but in “some countries [they] sound them fully, others not at all.” “The truest is, both to write and pronounce them.” Coote adds that the diphthongal pronunciation of “daughter” with the loss of [x], which he spells *dauter* [ˈdautəɪ] represents “the barbarous speech of your country people” (ibid.; Butler, 1633). This may support the hypothesis for a diphthongal pronunciation of similar spellings found in the colonial town records (discussed in Chapter 19), *haulf*, *caulfes*, *paustures*, etc. We also see alternation between [x] and [f] in *laugh*, *cough*, *tough*, *enough* and *daughter*... Wallis (1653) claims that, by his day, [x] and [ç] had nearly disappeared in the South and were restricted in use to the North of England and Scotland.

Isaac Newton (from Lincolnshire) records [x] in *nought*, *thought*, *rough* while Price (1668) has [ç] or [x] in *sigh*, *although*, *almighty* but has /f/ in *cough*, *tough* and *laugh* and *daughter*... which Dobson (ibid.) describes as a “Westernism.” Finally, Price adds *draught*, *trough* and *sigh* to the words which are realized with [h]. Richardson, a northerner, has [x] not [f] in *rough*, *enough*, *laugh* and *cough*....

In 1691, only fifteen years before Franklin’s birth, John Ray, considered by Ihalainen (1994, 201) as one of the first “dialectologists,” describes <gh> as being pronounced as either [h] or <ff> [f] (ibid., 987). As we have just noted, /x/ developed into [f] in some words. Dobson (1968, 555) notes that *laugh* in the 17th century was spelt *laff* [læf] “by Ray (1691) and others” showing that the [x] or [ç] had already moved to [f]. Cooper (1685) gives [bɒft] for *bought* and Dobson (1968, 796, note 4) argues that the diphthongization of [au] before [x] preceded the elision of [x] in the mid-17th century. This monophthongization must also have been a feature of the speech of some older conservative speakers who settled in the colonies. Shorrocks (1998, 402) cites the existence of a hybrid realization in [xf] recorded in the SED at Harwood, Lancashire: “-gh often [xf]” (Orton & Halliday, 1962-1963, I, 24). In this case, one wonders whether the passage from [x] > [f] may have passed via a hybrid [xf] variable preserved in Lancashire.

In 1983/84, I recorded a native of Alexandria, Virginia, named Thelma Penn (born circa 1900), who still pronounced “drought” as [dɹæʊft], which she defined as “a dry spell” (German, personal notes). This pronunciation sounds very much like a relic of earlier colonial speech. Not only had she preserved /f/ before /t/ but she also pronounced the diphthong as [əu] which is the expected realization (for GA /au/) in the Tidewater areas of the Chesapeake Bay and coastal areas stretching down to North Carolina’s Outer Banks.

Given this information, there can be no doubt that this [x ~ h] pronunciation was relatively common in Franklin’s youth although it appears unlikely that he ever used it himself. Considering the demographics of the settlement patterns in the Pennsylvania and Delaware colonies, it was probably more common there among the North Midland Quakers and even more so among the “Scots-Irish” who arrived *en masse* after the end of the French and Indian Wars in 1760. Although I have no solid proof for this, Franklin and his family probably favoured the pronunciations in [f] or [zero] realization as indicated in the town records (cf. the /au/ + /x/ diphthong above for more examples).

In the 17th-century American town records, for instance, an older variant of “daughter” pronounced with [f] is occasionally recorded in the Huntington records (NY), *dafter* in 1657 and 1660 and it appears in the Southold records (Mass.) as *dafters* [ˈdæftə(ɪ)z ~ ˈdaftə(ɪ)z] (1666). Hall (1942, 33) records “old-timers” in the Smokies pronouncing it [ˈdætəɪ]. In her novel, *A Plant of Lemon Verbena* (1895), entirely written in Somerset dialect, Leith spells “daughter,” *datter*, suggesting a pronunciation close to [ˈdatəɪ]

Likewise, the Hempstead records (Krapp, 1925, 148) give a number of words with [f]: *boeft*, possibly [bɔ(:)ft], for “bought.” Krapp also cites *Easton’s Narrative* (1675) as having *boft* [bɒft] for “bought” as well as *thoft* [θɒft] for “thought.” *Drauft* [drauft] or [dra(:)ft] is given for “draft”/“draught” in these same records for the year 1719. These spellings of <ght> as <ft> show that these pronunciations certainly coexisted even in Franklin’s day and were part of the original New England 17th-century feature pool.

1.5.2 Diphthongal Realizations in Contemporary English

Although the monophthongization of [ɒ] to [ɒ: ~ ɑ:] + [x] was commonplace during the 17th century, compensatory lengthening due to the loss of [x] would have been easily imaginable here. Nevertheless, this monophthongization was not a uniform process and in some varieties the diphthong has remained until the present day.

Note that Lass (1999, 95) points out that *thought*, *bought*, *daughter* were indicated by early writers as having [ɔ:u] but, from the 1640s, the merger with [au] became more common, “continuing into the next century.” We have seen that Wallis advocated *wau’ked* and *tau’ked*. It is thus possible that pronunciations in the southern US [tɒɔt], [bɒɔt] and [ˈdɒɔtəɹ] might well be echoes of this older realization. The degree to which this pronunciation was common in 18th-century Boston English is difficult to determine. I have heard the former in Virginia and Appalachia but never in Massachusetts.

Interestingly, Hall (1942, 32) associates ME /ɔ/ + /x/ with modern pronunciations of /ɔ/ ~ /ɒ/ ~ /ɑ/ and he makes a clear distinction between these three low back vowels. As noted above, I have noted [ɒɔ] for *-aught* and *-ought* spellings in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia and West Virginia which Hall transcribes as [ɔɔ] for the Smokies: *taught* [tɔɔt], *caught* [kɔɔt], *bought* [bɔɔt], *fought* [fɔɔt] (beside past. part. *fit* [fɪt]).

This [ɒɔ ~ ɔɔ] pronunciation may have spread as a result of both analogy and breaking before voiced velars in words such as *bog*, *log* and *dog*. I have found no such examples of breaking in English dialects in these last examples. However, we have seen that the SED gives long realizations of the vowel for *dog* [dɔ:g ~ dɒ:g ~ dɑ:g] in Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Monmouthshire and Gloucestershire. Similar long pronunciations may have led to diphthongization in southern American English giving [dɒɔg] on the same model as [bɒɔt], [tɒɔt], etc.

Shorrocks (1998, 281) also gives examples of these words with diphthongs which would suggest that this is indeed an older inheritance: *taught* [tɜɪt], *laugh* [lɜɪf], *ought* [ɜɪt], *bought* [bɜɪt], *thought* [θɜɪt], *brought* [brɪɜɪt], *bethought* [brɪθɜɪt], *fought* [fɜɪt], *nought/naught* (nothing) [nɜɪt], *ought/aught* (anything) [ɜɪt], *taught* [tɜɪt], *dough* [dɜɪf], *cough* [kɜɪf], *daughter* [dɜɪtə(ɹ)]. Keep in

mind my remarks and Whitehall's about contemporary Lancashire dialect pronunciation as having been far more widespread during former times, in many cases as we have seen, three to four hundred years past.

Whether these are traces of the original pronunciation or recent secondary innovations is difficult to prove, but the presence of diphthongized pronunciations before historical <gh> /x/ in Modern English dialects in both America and England (and <lk> in America) suggests that it may well be a common conservative inheritance.

We have already seen that, in New England, one of the principal pronunciations of *aught/ought* words appears to have been monophthongal [ɔ: ~ ɑ:] and we can assume this was Franklin's pronunciation as well (probably without postvocalic /-h/ or /-f/) in words like *thought*, *bought*, etc. The existence of 17th-century diphthongal pronunciations noted in the American South and in England implies that they were also once part of the New England colonial feature pool.

It would thus appear then that the 17th-century colonial feature pool would have possessed, depending on the environment, the following reflexes of ME /au/: [ɔu ~ ɔ: ~ ɑ:] + <gh> [h ~ x ~ f ~ Ø] (*bought*, *taught*, *thought*...) and [a: ~ æ:] + <nt>, <nce> words of French origin (*haunt*, *vaunt*, *taunt*). Again, Franklin's pronunciation of these appears to have been [ɔ: ~ ɑ:] as noted in his RMS. So, what explains the lowering of [æ:] > [ɔ: ~ ɔ: ~ ɑ:] in RP/GA? It may well be that the older southeastern [ɔ:], originating from French [ã], were considered more prestigious.

1.6 ME ou

Görlach (2012, 596) summarizes the historical development of ME diphthong /ɔu/ in "blow" and "know" which were pronounced [blɔ:] and [knɔ:] respectively and which, by the 1500 and 1600s, had merged with the raised variant of ME /ɔ:/ . Dobson (1968, 804-805) states that the first element of this diphthong was an "intermediate vowel" close to "cardinal open [ɔ:]." The diphthong would also have remained in use until the late 17th century. Görlach (2006) contends that ME *ow* /ɔu/ was monophthongized during the second half of the 16th and first half of the 17th century to [ɔ:] in words such as *snow*, *know*, *row* (vb)... Nevertheless, Dobson describes an intermediate pronunciation with [Δu] which is attested by numerous orthoepists (i.e. or was it [ɣu]?). As mentioned above, from [ɔ:] it was raised to the vicinity of [ɔ:] where it has remained in British and American dialects until the present day.

Dobson (1968, 807-808) provides evidence showing that numerous orthoepists preserved the diphthongal pronunciation – Wallis (1653), Wharton (1654) and Newton (1661) – but others such as Gil (1619), and Sherwood (1632) used the

monophthongal variant alongside it, while Wharton (1654) and Hodges (1644), for example, give only monophthongs in [ɔ:].

This duality subsists to the present day, with the diphthong /ou/ [ɔu ~ ɔ:] being preferred in GA while /əʊ/ is the model for RP. Once again, I wonder whether the diphthongized variants have not been with us all along in less prestigious dialects and resurfaced in the 19th century and made their way into RP and GA respectively under their present forms. The /əʊ/ RP pronunciation was introduced into the English system very recently in the first editions of Daniel Jones' *Pronouncing Dictionary*, /ou/ being the former English model (as it still is in GA).

Franklin's *Know*-rhymes suggest at first sight that they were pronounced with a short [ɔ] whereas, when followed by a nasal, *known*, was advanced to [nɪn] as we saw in the discussion on New England short o (Chapter 22). We saw numerous examples of Franklin's rhymes where it is obvious that words spelt <-own> are shortened [ʊ ~ ʏ ~ ʏ]: *none ~ grown, known ~ one, alone ~ grown, shown ~ stone, unknown ~ none, unknown ~ stone*.

The examples of rhymes with <ow> in open monosyllables are fairly numerous, showing pairing with <o> and <oe> spellings. In the following five-line stanza, we have five o-/ow rhymes:

Rain or Snow,
To Chili go,
You'll find it so,
For ought we know.
Time will show. (1734)

Note that when he wrote this poem, he was only twenty-eight years old which could suggest that his Boston accent was still intact. In other poems, Franklin has similar rhymes: *know ~ go* (2 examples), *grow ~ woe, throw ~ foe, show ~ foe* which poses no problem for the modern GA speaker [ou] or RP speaker [əʊ].

On the other hand, his rhyme of *bestow ~ now* caught my attention and led me to wonder what the precise pronunciation of *bestow* and *now* might have been for him in this very particular case. Exploring this path a little further, I checked all of Franklin's rhymes having *now*. Not surprisingly, I found several examples pairing *now ~ how* and *now ~ plow* which are in keeping with what we might expect for a GA or RP speaker. However, examples such as *now ~ know, now ~ low*, like *now ~ bestow* raised another question which was broached in the preceding chapter. Are these simple eye rhymes or could these <ow> spellings have been pronounced as a diphthong approaching [əu] or [ɪu] (cf. ME /u:/, Chapter 20).

If so, this corresponds to the dual assessment expressed above that these *snow, bestow, low* words were realized [ɔ: ~ ɔ:] or [əu ~ ɪu]. The rhyme of *bestows ~ house* strongly reinforces the hypothesis in favour of [əu ~ ɪu] in this case:

And Learning Largesses bestows,
And keeps unlicens'd open House. (1757)

However, this clashes with Franklin's RMS transcription, which is *flaʊər* [ʃlʊəɹ] "flower," *səʊnd* [səʊnd] "sound" and *əʊər* [əʊɹ] "our," etc. This may indicate that his RMS realizations represent a London pronunciation. If so, it could also explain, by analogy, his hesitation between *ʊi* [əi ~ ɪi] (RMS London /Δi/ and London *ai* [ai ~ ɪi] for *Price* words in his 1768 manuscript table). This discrepancy could also explain the confusion in his spelling of "destroyed" as *destraʊid* London [des'tɹɔɪd] vs Massachusetts [des'tɹɔɪd]. Only *ʊi* [əi] appears in Vaughan's 1779 edition of Franklin's RMS (cf. Chapter 25).

My argument here is based on simple symmetry: [əi ~ ɪi] would seem incompatible with [ɒu ~ əu]. If we accept Mazarin's interpretation of Wilkins' *y* character as representing [ɣ], then Wilkins' transcription of "our" as *yur* in his Apostles' Creed would suggest [ɣuɹ]. Recall that Wilkins' and Franklin's *ʊi* pronunciation was probably [ɪi] (and [Δi] in London, hence Franklin's RMS proto-phonemic /Δi/). So, for Wilkins at least, the symmetry between back and front diphthongs is perfect, as it is today in Newfoundland English [əi] vs [əu] and in RP and GA [aɪ] and [aʊ].

If this *Mouth* diphthong evolved in a parallel fashion to Wilkins and Cooper's *Price* vowels, it would have been realized as [ɣu ~ ʊu?]. In turn, this could provide a rational explanation for the New England clerks' spelling of *Mouth* words as <ouu> which, very broadly, could express a value ranging from [ʊu ~ ɒu ~ ɣu]: *tooun* [tʊun ~ tɒun ~ tɣun] (Groton, 1681), *toown* [tʊun ~ tɒun ~ tɣun] (Groton, 1683), *toowne* [tʊun ~ tɒun ~ tɣun] (Groton, 1681) versus *towen* [tɔwən ~ tɔwən?] for "town" (Groton 1683). We also have *alooowing* [ə'lɔuɪn?] for "allowing" (Groton, 1682) (Orbeck, 1927, 52-53). Unfortunately, the data is too scanty to come to a definitive conclusion. Recall that two hundred years later, "go" was recorded as [gu:] in not only East Anglia but also Massachusetts (Armfield, 1893). Orbeck (1927, 52) records "go," spelt *goue* [gu(:)] for Groton (1682). I have recorded it as [gy:] in Deane, Lancashire.

Note that the clerks sometimes gave shortened, monophthongal variants of this diphthong such as *sothe* [sɔθ ~ sɔ̃θ] for "south" and *droned* [dɹɔnd ~ dɹɔ̃nd] for "drowned," *acount* [ə'kɔnt ~ ə'kɔ̃nt] for "account" (Watertown, 1670; Plymouth, 1682) (Orbeck, 1927, 52).⁷

The most challenging of Franklin's rhymes in this category concerns the interpretation of *due* ~ *now*. Regarding *due*, we shall see below that glides following stops (barring *keow* for "cow," etc. which Franklin condemned)

7 I very specifically remember some older speakers from Tidewater, Virginia, during the late 1960s, pronouncing monosyllabic words such as "south," "about," "out," etc. almost as a monophthong resembling, to my ear and with hindsight, [ø^w ~ ø^u]. I transcribed this differently somewhere else!

are relatively rare in Franklin's RMS transcriptions and uncommon in the New England dialect after [t], [d] and [n] (cf. "natural" [nætəɹəʃ], "scripture" [skɹɪptəɹ], etc.) Normally, we have seen that his pronunciation of "new" was spelt **nu** [nu(:)] in his RMS, and we would expect his "dew" and "due" to have been pronounced as it is today in GA, that is, /du:/. Rhyming "due" [du:] and "now" [nu:] is of course impossible today in RP/GA). Assuming that these are near-perfect rhymes, the only rational explanation for this that I can imagine is that both words were pronounced as diphthongs, close to [əu ~ ɹu ~ uu?]. Considering that *mouth* words were pronounced /əu/ in coastal New England and were recorded as such in Martha's Vineyard until the 1970s (Labov, 1972), and by Wise (1948, 118) in coastal areas of Connecticut and Rhode Island and Massachusetts, this may be the best explanation for Franklin's *Mouth* diphthongs, rather than his RMS [ɹu] diphthong which appears to be very close to the late 18th century popular London realization. I have heard variants of this [əu] diphthong in *Mouth* words in Tidewater Virginia which, to my ear, was realized as: "house" [həus ~ həʊs], "out" [əʊt ~ ʊt], "about" [ə'bəʊt ~ ə'bʊt], etc. In this area of Virginia this diphthong is also extended to *Goat* words as well: "boat" [bəʊt], "blow" [bləʊ], "so" [səʊ], "snow" [snəʊ]...

I can go no further than this, but the suggestion seems to be that these open monosyllables, spelt <o>, <oe>, <ow>, may have had diphthongal realizations of the kind just indicated above rather than the simple [ɔ:] monophthong as I had initially imagined. So, what does this tell us about Franklin's pronunciation of *snow* ~ *go* ~ *so* ~ *know* ~ *show* ~ *now*? I would suggest a possible phonetic range in the vicinity of [ɹu ~ əu] for both *Mouth* words and *Know* words but also, in his native Boston pronunciation, [əu ~ ɹu]. Coming full circle, this implies that the vowels of <ow> in the poem were realized as [ɹu ~ əu] in open syllables, precisely as *Mouth* words in Franklin's natural idiom.

Rain or Snow,
To Chili go,
You'll find it so,
For ought we know.
Time will show. (1734)

2. Elements of the Consonantal System

The present section on the consonantal system is succinct when compared to the preceding chapters which have dealt almost exclusively with the vocalic system. The reason for this imbalance is due to the fact that consonants constitute the most stable component of any phonological system while vowels, as we have seen time after time, are far more volatile and subject to sudden and often rapid change. Expressed metaphorically, the consonantal system is the skeletal

structure on which the vocalic system – the tendons, sinews and flesh – are attached.

A number of consonantal features have already been broached in various sections, most notably, vocalization and elision of /l/ in certain environments, the effects of rhoticity on the preceding vowels (V + /r/) or the impact of bilabial approximants on the following vowel (w- + V). We also dealt with the development of ME /x/ to [f] (*enough, laugh, cough*, etc.) or its complete elision (*thought, fight, bought*, etc.).

In this section, I review only a fraction of consonantal features that were part of the New England feature pool with the understanding that those consonants that are not discussed correspond globally to their modern equivalents.

I concentrate here on those consonantal features that may have been part of Franklin's paritary (passive or active) register as a young man. At the very least, the consonants described below would have been familiar to him in his everyday conversations in Boston, Philadelphia and, later, in London, as well as during his travels through England.

2.1 Initial Consonant Clusters

2.1.1 ME /kn-/

The pronunciation of this [kn-] digraph was still considered "correct" by Sir Thomas Smith, Gil (1619; 1565-1535), Jonson (1640; 1572-1637) and Hodges (1643-1649; birth and death unknown) in words such as *know, knife, knee*, etc. Earlier proof of this realization is found in the French word *canif* meaning a jack-knife which was borrowed from Middle English *knife* during the Hundred Years' War. It is first attested in French in 1423 with the pronunciation of [ka.nif]. The epenthetic vowel here may be a purely French development. Note also Welsh *wdcneif* ['ud,kneif] "a wood-knife," an early borrowing taken from English (i.e. a wooden knife for shearing sheep) (Parry-Williams, 1923).

Robinson (1685) has [hn] as does Cooper (1685) who writes that "it is hn or n aspirated." Cross-linguistically, Cornouaillais Breton shares the same <kn> history for which the modern reflex is [hŋ] alongside metathesized [nh] (with a fortis, syllabic [ŋ]).⁸ Note that Icelandic shares a similar [hn] pronunciation in the same contexts. The same [hn] survived in Cumbria until recently. The pattern of evolution was thus [kn-] > [hn-] > [n-]. Cooper (1688) describes a sound appearing very precisely like the southern Cornouaillais Breton example with the same two

8 In the Breton dialect of southern Cornouaille, *knec'h*, etymologically meaning "hill", is realized as [n'he-x], with metathesis ([hŋ-] > [n'h]) meaning "upstairs." Breton *knec'h* and *krec'h* are related to "Creech" placenames in England, "hill", which was borrowed from Brythonic Celtic well over a millennium ago.

realizations. Dobson transcribes it as [hn] and [ŋ] (i.e. [nh]?). Brown (1700) gives the examples of *nack* or *hnack* for “knack” (Dobson, 1968, 976).

David Abercrombie (1948) shows that G. W.’s *Magazine* (1703) has <tn> for <kn> (Dobson, 1968, 977) which has only survived in the North of England... Dobson also concludes that G. W. was “certainly” a northerner. In his *Grammar of the Dialect of Penrith* (Cumbria), Percy Reaney (1927, 126) writes that the common Cumbrian pronunciation in his day was [tn-] in the latter part of the 19th century. Quoting Ellis, he writes that the pronunciation of “know” was [hnɔ:], but also [θnɔ:] when emphatic. Note Ellis has transcribed the vowel in its pre-1500 form (cf. Dobson above). Reaney points out that [kn-] was still pronounced [knæif] around Aberdeen for “knife” and [kni:] for “knee,” another remarkable relic pronunciation.

Considering the origins of the Quakers were mainly in the Northwest Midlands, these [hn ~ nh] and [tn] pronunciations (and [kn] among the Lowland Scots) may thus have not been foreign to Franklin, but these realizations were viewed as unacceptable in polite conversation, but also on the wane. The “sharedness principle” would provide at least one reason why these marginal features never took hold in America. In a dialectally mixed, mainly southern English population only the dominant phonetic characteristics of the majority dialect speakers would have been retained. In addition, prestigious, disparitary forms from above in the speech of the clergy, combined with rising levels of literacy, determined the nature of the levels of paritary and disparitary koines in each colony.

2.1.2 Intervocalic /-t-/ > [r ~ t̬]:

One of the most salient features of American English today is the lenition or voicing of intervocalic /-t-/ which is sometimes realized as an apico-alveolar flap [ɾ], or a voiced [t̬]. The question is whether this is a purely American innovation or whether it has its roots in Great Britain.

There is no way to know for certain whether this was also part of Franklin’s paritary Boston English register, because his 1768 transcriptions show no trace of this feature nor is there any indication of this feature in his poetry. In all probability, then as now, educated English speakers judged that it was substandard and vulgar. But, once again, I would say that there is no “either/or” response to this kind of question.

That lenited intervocalic /t/ existed in English English during the EME period is certain, however. Although I found no reference to this feature in Dobson’s *English Pronunciation: 1500-1700*, Wells writes that the “LAE shows *butter* with [d] everywhere south-west of a line from Weston-Super-Mare to Portsmouth” (my italics) (Wells, 1980, 344).

In his EDD, Wright (1905, 228-229) signals the presence of [-t̚] in the following words: *bitter* (Yorkshire, Lancashire, Essex, Sussex, West Wiltshire, East Devon); in *better* (Sussex, South Somerset), in *butter* (as just indicated by Wells) throughout the “West & South.” It appears in *Saturday* in North Worcester, East Suffolk, South Surrey, Sussex, West Wiltshire, Dorset and West Somerset. *Bottom* has voiced [t] in West and South Somerset, Devon but also northeast Scotland and northern England more generally... This is also true for *kettle* in South Surrey, West Sussex, Wiltshire, East Dorset, Somerset, East Devon, *beetle* in Sussex, Essex West Wiltshire, *little* in West Suffolk, Essex, East Kent, Sussex, Dorset, Somerset, Devon and, finally, *nettle* in Sussex and North Devon.

The regions where it appears most commonly in these words seem to be Essex, Sussex, Suffolk, Wiltshire but also Somerset and Devon, regions which provided the greatest number of settlers to both Massachusetts and Virginia. I have often repeated that 59% of Bostonians during Franklin’s youth were originally from Suffolk or Essex with an additional 10% from London (Fischer, 1989); the voicing of intervocalic [t] must certainly have been a relatively common element of the feature pool in many words.

It is possible, if not probable, that the phenomenon was most widespread among “vulgar” vernacular speakers (hopelessly impoverished indentured servants) who made up the largest contingent of settlers to Virginia. It is also likely that, once established as part of the North American feature pool, it may have spread analogically in all contexts where intervocalic <-t-> <-tt-> exists in writing. That this American-sounding feature may have been far more widespread in areas of southern Great Britain prior to the migration period is probable given its common use in Ulster English and also in Australian English.

In passing, note too that [-t̚] > [r ~ t̚] occurs in external sandhi position involving monosyllables throughout Lancashire, Yorkshire and the North Midlands. From there, [t̚ ~ r] was reanalyzed as an approximant /r/ [ɹ] as in modern [ˈpʊɹ ɪ ˈɒnt ˈtɛːbəl] “Put it on the table” (German, personal notes, Deane, Lancashire). Wright gives the following example: “Let it be” [ˈlɛɹ ɪt ˈbiː] (my transcription of Wright’s example). Historically, a similar evolution was followed by French “pottage” which was reinterpreted in English as “porridge” following a similar pattern, original French [-t̚] > reinterpreted in English as an alveolar flap and then a retroflex [ɹ] or approximant [ɹ]. If this last development was part of the colonial feature pool it did not survive as such in America, once again, on account of the “sharedness principle.”

The best support for the early presence of [t̚] in the feature pool, and hence its English origin, is seen in a few examples of the Massachusetts town records (Orbeck, 1927, 76). He writes that “the voiced point stop appears occasionally in place of [t] but most examples are in word-final position: *instand* “instant” (Groton, 1694), *died* “diet” (Dedham, 1675), *indend* “intend” (Watertown,

1650), *Eurid* “Everett” (Dedham, 1685) and *Prescode* “Prescott” (Groton, 1670; Dedham, 1703).

Among the most pertinent examples of intervocalic lenited [-t̪-] are found in *carpenders* [ˈkæɪpɛnt̪əɪz] (Groton, 1665), and *carepindur* [ˈkæɪpɪnt̪əɪ] “carpenter(s)” (Watertown, 1674), *Shaduck* [ˈʃæt̪ʊk] (Groton, 1704) and *Shatduck* [ˈʃæt̪ʊk] for “Shattuck” (Groton, 1695), *compadent* [ˈkɒmpɛt̪ənt] “competent” (Dedham, 1661), *marchindabll* [ˈmæɪt̪ɪndəbɪl] “merchantable” (Groton, 1683) and *inhabid(ants)* [ɪnˈhæbɪdənts] “inhabitants” (Groton, 1681).

To conclude, there can be no doubt that [-t̪-] was already a feature of EME English and that it was originally part of the New England feature pool, along with [-t-]. In all probability, it was generalized in America when intervocalic but it retained its [t-] value when in stressed position such as “intent” [ɪnˈtɛnt], “entertain” [ɛnt̪əɪˈteɪn], etc.

2.2 [θ-] > [t- ~ d-], [ð-] > [d-]

We saw in Chapter 14 that Franklin (1739) gave the stereotypical pronunciation of “this” by New Yorkers as *dis* [dɪs]. Realization of initial [θ] and [ð] as [t-] or [d-] is encountered in a scattering of English dialects but mainly restricted to initial <thr> [θɹ] in the Southeast and Southwest. For instance, Alicia Leigh (1895) gives *drough* for “through,” *drush* for “thrush” for late 19th-century Somerset while Gachelin (1981, 537-538) has *drash* for “thresh,” *dreshel* for “threshold.” “Through” is rendered *drough* in Hampshire. Grandgent (1899, 238) gives the New England example of *furder* for “further.” Franklin’s observation rules out any possible Irish and Italian influence, which has often been evoked as the origin for this early New York realization. I have proposed in Chapter 14 that, because New York was formerly New Amsterdam, a Dutch colony seized by the British in 1664, a Dutch substratum could be a real possibility here. If so, this [d-] realization would seem to show a trace of the original Dutch-influenced English of the founder generation there, perhaps due to intermarriage with the local inhabitants. It would only have survived in a regionally circumscribed paritary register, however. This stigmatized feature may have been reinforced by later non-English speaking immigration during the 19th century, first the Africans (+1700s), Irish (+1850s) and Italians (+1880s).

2.3 Voiceless Velar Fricative /x/⁹

When discussing the ME /au/ and /ou/ diphthongs above we examined in some detail the development of these vowels into monophthongs. We saw that Isaac

9 Cf. ME /a/ + /x/ and ME /a/ + /x/ above.

Newton had advocated the pronunciation of /x/ while at Cambridge in 1661. Franklin relates in his *Autobiography* that a meeting had been envisaged between him and Isaac Newton at Batson's Coffee-shop in London in 1725, two years before the latter's death. If he had met him, Franklin would doubtlessly have heard him pronounce words such as "thought," "nought" and "rough" as [θɒxt], [nɒxt and [rɒx] just as in conservative modern Scots. To repeat, Franklin certainly heard variant pronunciations of these words in Pennsylvania and Delaware where there was a large population of Quakers, 80% of whom were from the Northwest Midlands (Fischer, 1989).

Another point of interest with regard to the Massachusetts town records is that the clerks occasionally insert non-etymological <gh> spellings in a number of words such as *resaights* [ɹe'sei(ç)ts ~ re'sæi(ç)ts] for "receipt" (Watertown, 1673), *waight* [wæi(ç)t ~ wei(ç)t] for "wait" (Watertown, 1662). The precise significance of this <gh> spelling is uncertain but it could mean that, by the last quarter of the 17th century, the scribes were having difficulty distinguishing where <gh> should and should not be pronounced or written. This may be a sign supporting the idea that [x ~ ç] had disappeared from the speech of the more cultivated and literate speakers, even in words where <gh> was etymological as *haight* [hæi(ç)t ~ hei(ç)t] "height" (Dedham, 1673). It appears to have been conserved for longer after back vowels. We have mentioned on several occasions that Newton advocated its pronunciation in words such as *thought*, *though* and *rough*. It appears to have almost completely disappeared during the first half of the 18th century in southern England. A similar state of affairs existed in America where [x ~ ç] probably was lost during the latter period of koineization. It survived far longer in areas of northern England and can be heard to this day in traditional Scots (cf. Robinson 1985 for examples).

2.4 Bilabial Approximant /w/

2.4.1 <w> + Back Vowels

<w> [u ~ w]: Interestingly, we shall see that in his *Reformed Mode of Spelling*, Franklin systematically transcribes words like "would" as **uuld** or **uld**, etc. Based on his descriptions and dialectal evidence (cf. Chapter 27), I have concluded that he literally pronounced it [uld]. This feature is certainly not new. John Hart, in his *Orthographie* (1569), which he describes as his "reformed" spelling, transcribes *uld* for "would," *huitf* for "which," *ureit* for "write," *urds* for "words" and *huēr* for "where," just as Franklin does in his RMS. This leaves little doubt that <w> had a clear vocalic quality during the 16th century and that this value

was still a reality in the colonies¹⁰ Shakespeare, who was from Warwickshire, often spelt “world” and “woman,” *’orlɔ*, *’oman*.

As it happens, West Country speakers also drop [w-] in their speech before back vowels. This is also a Welsh-language feature (Welsh has no initial /w-/ except in lenited form: gw- > w-) but also conservative, Welsh-influenced English where it was realized as [u-] (Parry, 1977; 1979, 1999; Penhallurick, 1991; Upton and Widdowson, 1996).

Precious confirmation that this pronunciation was current in New England is provided by Webster (1789, 86) who writes that <w> “has nearly the short sound of oo; for *will*, *dwell* are pronounced as if written *ooill*, *dooell*.” This corresponds well with Franklin’s descriptions of this semi-vowel (cf. Chapter 27) demonstrating that it is not a quirk, as some scholars have thought in the past. Walker (1791, xv) says the same: W is no more than the French diphthong ou. Thus “west” is equivalent to *ouest*, and “wall” to *ouall*.

That this this vocalic realization of <w> was also general in Virginia, which took in large numbers of pro-royalist West Country people following the decapitation of King Charles I in 1649, is virtually certain.

To conclude, in words like “two” and “answer,” and unlike in modern Scots where the <w> has been preserved after /t/ [twɒ], /w/ appears to have already been lost very early, as can be seen from *to* [tɔ] (Groton, 1694), probably via assimilation [uɔ] > [ɔ:]. Note also the loss of /w/ following /s/ <sw> in unaccented syllables, as in “answer,” spelt *ansur* [ˈænsəɹ] (Watertown, 1672) and *ansarabell* [ˈænsəɹəbɛl] [ˈænsəɹəbɛlʔ] (Watertown, 1677), *anserable* [ˈænsɛɹəbɛl] (Groton, 1665)... Yet, I have heard *sword* [swɔɹd] in Appalachia.

2.4.2 <wr> [w] + [ɹ]

Hodges (1644), a Londoner, indicates initial [wr-] (10 times), beside [r-] (7 times), even though the shift from [wr-] > [r-] was becoming more common during the course of the 16th century. Dobson (1968, 975-976) comments on the difficulty of pronouncing /w/ before /r/: “w is not sounded without difficulty” and that it is “very little sounded without too much affectation and constraint.” However, such descriptions by this orthoepist lead me to wonder whether it might have been pronounced as a weakly articulated vowel resembling [ʊ ~ u] + approximant [ɹ] + [r-] (i.e. [ʊɹ-] or [ʊr-]), at least in formal pronunciation, in which case it would have been realized as in modern Welsh, e.g. *ei wraig* [i, uˈraig] “his wife.”

Note that <w> + C was still pronounced [vɹ-] in the Somerset dialect (Wright, 1905) which suggests a former shift from [wɹ-] > [vɹ-]! Hart (1569) writes *ureit*

10 The palatal approximant [j] was also vocalic at this time and was pronounced [i] as can be seen in the spelling of *iuzd* “used,” *ius* “use.”

for “write” [ʷaɪt] while Franklin transcribes it as *ryit* in his RMS, suggesting the loss of vocalic <w> before <r> in his own speech and, most likely, in Polly Stevenson’s as well. Although I have found no evidence that Franklin pronounced “write” [uˈɹɪt] or “wrong” [uɹŋ ~ uɹŋŋ] in his poems or elsewhere, this [ʷɹ] was probably one of those peripheral dialectal features which was initially part of the New England feature pool but which had virtually no chance of being retained in the developing koines, especially at a time when vocalized <w> + <r> was increasingly recessive in England itself. Indeed, most of the examples cited by Orbeck (1927) show the loss of initial [w-] in this environment: *ronged* “wronged” (Dedham, 1705), *ritten* “written” (Groton, 1680), *riting* (Groton, 1683), side by side what may be [ʷɹ-] in *wrent* “rent” [ʷɹɛnt?] (Dedham, 1695).

2.5 Palatalization

We have seen in the section on ME /u:/ and in Chapter 14 that Franklin (1739) cites the existence of a glide vowel after the velar stop /k-/ + [ɐ], [ɪ], [j]. The example he gives is *keow* for “cow” which probably had variant pronunciations such as [kɐu], [kəu] or [kɛəu] which he associated with both New England and New Jersey. It was in fact far more widespread than that and plainly existed in the southern colonies as it was until very recently. This realization of initial palatalized /k/ was one of the pronunciations he condemned and which he sought to purge from the speech of the students of his Philadelphia Academy, hence the reason for his insistence on the necessity of an “English School,” the role of which was to teach a prescriptive model of pronunciation and grammar to young students.

Webster detested this pronunciation which he considered to be a “modern pronunciation” and an attempt by fashion conscious Americans to imitate London speech.

A similar method is recommended to those polite speakers who are so fond of imitating the English stage pronunciation as to embrace every Angularity, however disagreeable. I refer to the very modern pronunciation of *kind*, *sky*, *guide*, &c. in which we hear the short e before i, *keind*, or *kyind*, *skey*, &c. This is the same barbarous dialect, as the *keow* and *veow* of the eastern country people. (Webster, 1789, 109)

Unlike Franklin or Webster who abhorred [kɐ-] and [gɐ-] realizations, associating it with rural speech, Walker (1791) advocates its continued use in polite society by pointing out the fact that it had been long established in the English language, which is very true. A century earlier, Wallis (1653) stated that *cyan*, *gyet*, *begyin*, only occurred in the speech of Midlanders (Dobson, 1968, 234, 952). This too is significant. I would also add that his <ky> and <gj> spelling suggests that it is an innovative palatal glide. Regardless, Franklin and Webster’s outright rejection

of this pronunciation indicate another sociolinguistic divergence between the New England koine(s) and the increasingly “fix’d” English standard.

Elsewhere, Dobson (1968, 952) repeats that the palatalization of voiced and voiceless velar stops is a feature of Midlands English that does not normally occur in the North of England or in Scotland. However, this statement is contradicted by Joseph Wright (1905, 251) who writes [kɛ-] and [gɛ-] survived in numerous words such as *gate*, not only in the Northwest Midlands (Cheshire, Lancashire), the North (Durham, Cumbria, Westmoreland) but also in more southerly areas such as Leicestershire, Rutland, Oxfordshire, Sussex, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Devonshire and Cornwall. This characteristic clearly had its source in England and spread throughout all the colonies.

Although the evidence is scanty, it is evident that this glide vowel existed in initial position after voiceless and voiced bilabial stops /pɛ-/ , /bɛ-/. For instance, *piert* [piɛ:(ɪ)t ~ pjɛ:(ɪ)t] for “part” (1660) is given rather than [pæ:(ɪ)t] (or [pa:(ɪ)t]) showing a glide following bilabial (cf. Krapp, 1925, 56). Shorrocks (1998, 222) gives palatal [j] after [b] in “beat” [bjɛt] and “beaten” [bjɛtɪ]. It commonly occurred following labiodental fricatives /fɛ-/ (few), and /vɛ-/ (view). Franklin transcribes *few* and *pure* as **fiu** and **piur** respectively, probably realized as a diphthong [iu] (cf. Chapter 27).

There can be little doubt that this [i] glide was a common element of the 17th-century feature pool, which later became [j]. The consonants potentially affected were [p, b, t, d, k, g,] but also [f, v, s, ʃ, tʃ, ðʒ,], liquids [r, l] and the nasals [n, m] .

2.5.1 Lack of Palatalization

We saw above that Görlach (2012, 597-98) proposed that the loss of palatal quality in words like *Tuesday* [ˈtu:zdeɪ], *tune* [tu:n], *dew* [du:], etc. is an American innovation. Nevertheless, we have already shown that there is ample evidence that this loss of the glide (vowel or vocoid) was also common before alveolar stops in scattered areas of southern and eastern England as well as in the West Midlands.

In New England, the phenomenon appears to have extended to all initial and medial voiceless and voiced stops in words spelt <tu>, <du>, <cu>, <gu>, <m>?, <nu>, <lu>, <su>... and a number of examples are found in Franklin’s *Reformed Mode of Spelling*. Once again, Lowell provides a wonderful array of examples, some of which we encounter in Franklin’s *Reformed Mode of Spelling* in Chapter 28, showing that this must have been a feature of his own idiolect.

Edwin Bowen makes the following remark about this class of word, dating these features to 17th-century England.

Another class of former pronunciations surviving now as an Irishism, or at best as a provincialism merely, is exemplified by such words as *nature*, *creature* and *picture*.

In Dryden's and Pope's time these words were pronounced "nater," "crater" and "pictor." These pronunciations are preserved still in the Yankee dialect, as shown in Lowell's inimitable *Biglow Papers*, and of course they are frequently heard on Irish lips. But they long ago dropped out of the speech of polite society. There is one notable exception found in the word *figure*. The variant pronunciation of this word as "figer" survives in standard English as a heritage from the seventeenth century. (Bowen, 1905, 502)

Bowen is referring to a common "Americanism" in contexts such as "Figure it out yourself!," "Facts and figures" or even "She has a nice figure," all three pronounced [ˈfɪgəɹ].

The source of this is obviously England and not America. Orbeck (1927, 60) furnishes a considerable number of such examples: *Tusday* (Groton, 1687), *Tuseday* (Plymouth, 1696), *nu* for "new" (Watertown, 1675) and *Hu* for "Hugh" (Watertown, 1657). This spelling of "new" is precisely the form adopted by both Franklin and Stevenson in their own transcriptions suggesting that it was used by London speakers as well. In his RMS, script it is *nu*.

The same type of phenomenon affecting [k], [g], [p], [n], [m], [l], [s] are described by Bowen and is documented by Orbeck, commonly occurring in medial position: *regalating* [ˌɹɛgəˌlɛ(:)tɪŋ] for "regulating" (Dedham, 1673), but note *regulat* [ˌɹɛgwɪˌlɛ(:)t] (Groton, 1685), *amonition* [ˈæmənɪʃən] for "ammunition" (Dedham, 1673), *prosecat* [ˈpɹɒsɛkətʔ] for "prosecute" (Dedham, 1675), *issu* [ˈɪsu] for "issue" (Dedham, 1662). Other examples are *anoaly* for "annually" [ˈænəwəli] (Groton, 1685), *uallowable* [ˈvæləwəbəl] for "valuable" (Groton, 1683) (Orbeck, 1927, 63).

As seen under the heading of ME *iu* and ME *eu*, other transcriptions seem to preserve the older [ɛu] pronunciation described by Dobson above: *iseue* [ˈɪsɛu] (Dedham, 1696), *valewe* [ˈvælɛu] (Dedham, 1638), *vallew* [ˈvælɛu] (Dedham, 1662), *valewed* [ˈvælɛud] (Dedham, 1636), *valewably* [ˈvælɛuəbli] (Dedham, 1637). *Continew* [kənˈɪnɛu] (Dedham, 1660), *Jenewary* [ˈdʒɛnɛwɛɹi ~ ˈdʒɛnɛwɛɹi] (Dedham, 1661) show the loss of this (Orbeck, 1927, 60).

More such examples include *deputy* for "deputy" [ˈdɛptɪ] for "deputy" (Dedham, 1684), *dypetys* [ˈdɛptɪz] for "deputies" (Dedham, 1679), *pertikler* [ˌpɛɹtɪklɛɹ] for "particular" (Groton, 1701), *partickle* [ˌpɛɹtɪklɛ] with final r-loss for "particular" (Groton, 1683), *aingeler* [ˈɛɪŋgələɹ] for "angular" (Groton, 1665) (Orbeck, 1927, 63). These pronunciations of [ˈdɛptɪ] and [ˌpɛɹtɪklɛ] are still common in American English today.

Finally, the records give *futer* [ˈfʊtɛɹ] for "future" (Dedham, 1662), *lector* [ˈlɛktɛɹ] for "lecture" (Dedham, 1639), *nater* [ˈnɛ:tɛɹ] for "nature" (Groton, 1693), *naterall* [ˈnætɛɹəl] for "natural" (Dedham, 1681), *paster* [ˈpæstɛɹ] for "pasture" (Dedham, 1697), *scripter* [ˈskɹɪptɛɹ] for "scripture" (Groton, 1699 and 1704) (Orbeck, 1927, 72). See Webster's comments on the "correctness" of these

pronunciations and condemnations of the palatalized realizations in Chapters 14 and 27.

What is striking about these pronunciations is continuity between these early 17th-century Massachusetts records and the collection of examples provided by Lowell's *Biglow Papers* (1848) two hundred years later, showing that, beyond a shadow of a doubt, numerous non-standard features of this kind were adopted in not only the paritary register of the Massachusetts koine but, to some degree, the disparitary New England koine of the 18th century. Indeed, we shall see in Chapter 27 that Franklin's examples are precisely the same as these, suggesting that elements of his own idiolect slipped, almost certainly unintentionally, into his *Reformed Mode of Spelling*. Furthermore, these features must have appeared natural enough to Polly Stevenson, a native of Kensington, London, that she did not have Franklin correct these transcriptions. Either that or, equally possible, given her inexperience in using his script, she may simply not have noticed the "errors."

2.6 Rhoticity

The retention of /r/ in all etymologically justifiable positions appears to have been the general rule among the more formally educated New Englanders and Franklin and the New England poets strictly adhered to this rule (cf. Chapter 27). Indeed, nowhere in his RMS does Franklin propose its elision. Normatively, postvocalic /r/ was still pronounced in London until the late 18th century, and Walker also advocated its use even if his description of it suggests that it was weakly articulated in post-vocalic position. Likewise, Mazarin (2020, 14, footnote 18) argues that r-loss is rarely recorded before 1800 although he himself cites evidence for this as early as 1500. One of the earliest examples of r-loss of which I am aware is OE and ME *baers* [bærs] which gave Modern English *bass* towards the end of the 14th century (cf. also French *bars*).

Having said this, the evidence for r-loss is attested in 17th-century New England (see below), suggesting that it also must have been very commonplace in eastern and southeastern England during the same period. Once again, it was almost certainly associated with unpolished vernacular speakers.

Grandgent (1899), a native of Massachusetts, states that r-loss had spread during the course of the 19th century and was fairly general by around 1850, a development which was increasingly common in the London area during the same time period. This innovation is now a salient and prestigious characteristic of RP English, "car" being pronounced [kɑ:] with RP and [ka:] in Massachusetts.

Unambiguous signs of r-loss can be seen in the Southold records (NY) which give *Auter*, possibly ['a:tə(ɹ)? ~ 'ɑ:tə(ɹ)?] for "Arthur" (1678) (pronounced ['a:θə] in traditional Massachusetts English today) while the Huntington records (NY)

have *bud* [br:d?] for “bird” (1676).

Once again, Orbeck (1927, 42) provides a large array of examples showing r-lessness must already have been commonplace: *authordox* [ʰ:θədɒks] (Watertown, 1674), *othadox* [ʰ:θədɒks] (Watertown, 1670), *passell* [ʰa:səl] for “parcel” (Watertown, 1651), *passen* [ʰa:sən] for “parson,” *woks* [wɒks] for “works” (Groton, 1683), *fust* [fʌ(:)st ~ fə:st?] (Groton, 1704), *boad* [bɒ(:)d] for “board” (Dedham, 1641), *Clack* [kla(:)k] for “clerk” (Groton, 1703), *woned* [wɒ(:)nd] for “warned” (Groton, 1706), *noth* [nɒ(:)θ] for “north” (Groton, 1663), *notherly* [nɒ(:)ðəli ~ 'nɒ(:)ðələi?] (Groton, 1668), *mach* [ma:tʃ] for “March” (Plymouth, 1705), *Dorchestes* [dɒ:tʃɛstəz] for “Dorchester’s” (Dedham, 1698). Dobson (1968, 992) cites the loss of /r/ in *Dorchester* as *Dochester* (early 18th c.). Today, the same words in Massachusetts would be pronounced virtually in the same way, except for “works” and “board.” In all these examples with <ar>, the result is the lowering of [æɪ] > [aɪ] > [a:]. Similarly, <oar> [ɔɪ] > [ɒɪ] > [ɒ: ~ ɑ:] and <or> [ɒɪ] > [ə: ~ ɜ:].

There is such a modern flavour to these pronunciations that I have indicated the equivalent contemporary pronunciations for southeastern Massachusetts with which I am most familiar (German, personal notes for Fairhaven, Mattapoisett and New Bedford, Mass.). *Arthur* [ʰa:θə], *bird* [bɜ:d ~ bɜ:d], *parson* [ʰa:sən], *orthodox* [ʰa:θədə-ks], *parcel* [ʰa:səl], *board* [bɒ:d ~ bɑ:d], *warned* [wɑ:nd], *north* [nɒ:θ ~ nɑ:θ], *March* [ma:tʃ], *Dorchester* [dɒ:tʃɛstə ~ 'dɑ:tʃɛstə]. Nagy and Roberts (2008, 258) give both [a:] and [æ:] as New England pronunciations of orthographic <ar> but [a:] strikes me as far more common.

We shall see that Franklin did not lower his [æ] vowel before /r/ in his RMS. It is therefore possible that occasional non-etymological New England <ar> spellings could reflect the clerks’ attempts to portray the lowering of [æ] > [a:] (or perhaps even [ɑ:]) rather than representing the presence of intrusive /r/: *arst* [a:(x)st] “asked,” *darter* [dɑ:(x)tə(x) ~ 'dɑ:(x)tə(x)] for “daughter,” *arfter* [ʰa:(x)ftə(x) ~ ɑ:(x)ftə(x)] for “after,” *marster* [mɑ:(x)stə(x) [mɑ:(x)stə] for “master.”¹¹ Note that Grandgent gives *arter* for “after” in 19th-century Massachusetts but the realization of the /r/ here may be an attempt to portray a lowered [a: ~ ɑ:] (Grandgent, 1899, 238).

Despite the fact that the English Southwest has a quite thoroughly rhotic pronunciation, Burton (2010) points out that William Barnes’ pronunciation of “Dorset” was [dɒsət] and “horse” [hɒs]. A handful of words are r-less and it would appear that this was the case cross-dialectally. The same was true in 18th-century America. The fact that these words are often the same for both American and English is another point of interest. These will be examined separately but

11 This spelling is also found in the *Slave Narratives* recorded by Alan Lomax and his team of fieldworkers during the late 1930s.

include a subclass of words that include *curse*, *first*, *burst*, *worst*, etc. Lowell offers a myriad of r-less examples of this kind for the Boston vernacular in his *Biglow Papers* (1848).

<i>wus</i>	[wʌ(:)s ~ wə(:)s]	“worse”
<i>wuth</i>	[wʌ(:)θ ~ wə(:)θ]	“worth”
<i>bust</i>	[bʌ(:)st ~ bə(:)st]	“burst”
<i>fust</i>	[fʌ(:)st ~ fə(:)st]	“first”
<i>cus</i>	[kʌ(:)s ~ kə(:)s]	“curse”
<i>shut</i>	[ʃʌ(:)t ~ ʃə(:)t]	“shirt”
<i>dut</i>	[dʌ(:)t ~ də(:)t]	“dirt”
<i>pus</i>	[pʌ(:)s ~ pə(:)s]	“purse”
<i>thust</i>	[θʌ(:)st ~ θə(:)st]	“thirst”
<i>chutch</i>	[tʃʌ(:)tʃ ~ tʃə(:)tʃ]	“church”
<i>intusspussed</i>	[ɪntə'spʌ(:)st ~ ɪntə'spə(:)st]	“interspersed” (cf. r-loss in Chapter 27)

I have transcribed all these words with [ʌ(:) ~ ə(:)] for the reasons presented in Chapter 20, that is, Grandgent quotes Lowell (born in 1818) as having said that he had never heard [ʌ] used by Massachusettsans, only by Connecticut people.

2.6.1 Contemporary English and American Evidence

Beal (1999, 165, footnote) makes the interesting observation that:

the CSED gives *bust*, *cuss* as “informal,” whilst the OED cites them as “US.” Both exist in my own dialect, and not as US imports. They have each developed a range of senses distinct from their more formal counterparts.

Beal’s point must be stressed here. Far from being an American import, Upton and Widdowson (1996, 166-167, map 83) show that “cuss” is by far the dominant pronunciation of *curse* throughout England, especially in the North, Midlands and Southwest.

If any more proof were needed, r-loss in this class of words is widespread throughout England (even where rhoticity is the norm). Shorrocks (1998, 241) gives many of the same words for Bolton, Lancashire as cited by Lowell: *purse* [pus], *worse* [wus], *worst* [wust], *cursing* ['kʊsɪn] “cussing,” *worth* [wʊθ], *burst* [bʊst], *nurse* [nʊs], *nursing* ['nʊsɪn], *daren't* [dʊsnt] (cf. ['dæɪsnt], Wise Co., Virginia) and *pussy* for “pursey.” This shows, once again, that r-loss in these examples must certainly have been common across large areas of England

before the 17th-century settlements were founded. I can only see this as yet another example of dialectal continuity!

Likewise, Wright (1905, 395) gives r-less [kɑ:s] “curse” for Norfolk and [kɒs] for Norfolk as well as Sussex, Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset and Devon. These pronunciations seem to confirm my hypothesis that Franklin’s pronunciation of *Nurse* words was [nɒɪs]. Recall his rhymes of *curse* [kɒɪs] ~ *worse* [wɒɪs] (1735, 1740), *purse* ~ *horse* (1734), *purse* ~ *worse* (1735) (cf. Chapter 20).

I find it interesting that speakers of vernacular American English do not necessarily associate “to cuss” with “to curse” often assuming they are different lexemes. “Cuss” has a generic sense meaning to use foul, offensive language (it is also viewed as substandard) whereas “curse” is more formal and slightly more specific, implying (to me at least) blaspheming, “casting a spell” on someone or something, but also using blasphemous language.¹² Similarly, *bust* and *burst* are now semantically distinct with *bust* meaning “to arrest,” “to punch,” etc. and *burst* meaning to “explode.”

And yet, when we consider that some 17th-century New Englanders were still pronouncing *turn* as [tɛɪn] and *return* as [rɛtɛɪn], one can only imagine the wide range of possible pronunciations Franklin must have heard around him on any given day. It was in this linguistic cauldron that the New England koine was being formed and that, following the “sharedness principle,” the less common pronunciations were progressively abandoned, generally as a result of sociolinguistic pressures from above, and through increased literacy, but also, internally, depending on the paritary and disparitary institutions in which one had the most social interactions.

Burton (2010) shows the same r-less pronunciation for many of the same words in Dorset during the middle of the 19th century, despite the fact that Dorset is an otherwise fully rhotic region. This shows, once again, the clear dialectal links between American and southern and Midland English dialects. Note Lowell’s spellings of “north” [nɒθ] (rhyming with “broth” [bɪθ]), *no’thern* [ˈnɒ:ðən] but also *pufficly* for [ˈpə(:)fɛktli ~ ˈpʌ(:)fɛktli?].

To conclude this section, the classes of <ir>, <er> and <ur> words (+ /θ/, /s/, /st/) presented above appear to have lost post-vocalic /r/ quite early in East Anglia and eastern England more generally. Lack of rhoticity appears to have been quite widespread in Massachusetts as early as the 17th century, especially among the working classes. The better educated segments of New England society strived to maintain it and Franklin stresses the importance of pronouncing it in his RMS.

On Franklin’s arrival in Philadelphia at the age of seventeen, he would have

12 Similar relic pronunciations such as *whip* ~ *whup*, *thresh* ~ *thrash*, *stamp* ~ *stomp*, *tramp* ~ *tromp*, *sauce* ~ *sass*, etc. have entered standard English, also with different meanings.

encountered a large majority of northwest Midlanders who still had a rhotic pronunciation. For the reasons explained in Howard Giles' "Communication Accommodation theory," this presumably encouraged him to maintain it in his own speech. In his "Reformed Mode of Spelling," I have interpreted his /r/ to represent, not a trilled apico-alveolar /r/ as suggested by Wise (1948: 118) but rather a voiced frictionless approximant similar to [ɹ] or retroflex [ɻ], which he presents as occurring in post-vocalic position (the key word Franklin gives for this is "art"; cf. Chapter 27).

2.6.2 <ow> as [əɪ]

The final <ow> of words like *fellow*, *yellow*, *mellow* are commonly pronounced [əɪ ~ ə] in many American and British dialects today and implies that this too was part of the original colonial feature pool, not only in New England but throughout the colonies. Today it is generally associated with rural American varieties.

The Huntington records confirm this hypothesis: *medder* ['mɛdəɪ] for "meadow" (1662), *widder* ['wɪdəɪ] for "widow" (1673) while the *Three Military Diaries*, give *feler* ['fɛləɪ] for "fellow," *arrers* ['æɹəɪz] for "arrows," *follar* ['fɒləɪ] for "follow"... (examples cited in Krapp, 1925, 252).

Lowell's *Biglow Papers* provides a number of examples for New England where <er> [əɪ] is given in place of <ow> spellings. Whether the [ɪ] of <er> is fully elided or not is difficult to tell, but it certainly was for many speakers in the mid-19th century: *swaller* ['swaləɪ], *yaller* ['jæləɪ ~ 'ja:ləɪ] and *yeller* ['jɛləɪ] but, for the "gallows" Lowell writes *gallus*, presumably ['gæləz].

Upton and Widdowson (1996, 28, Map 14) show that "yellow" is pronounced *yeller* in a large portion of the Southwest Midlands as well as the greater part of the Southwest, extending eastward to an area directly to the south of London. The link with popular American speech today is thus unavoidable and suggests that it too was part of the initial feature pool as is confirmed by the New England town records.

The normal pronunciation in dialects where rhoticity is dominant is [əɪ]: *feller* ['fɛləɪ] for "fellow," *yeller* ['jɛləɪ] for "yellow," etc. and ['fɛlə] and ['jɛlə] where it is not.

It was noted in the footnote above that *whip* ~ *whup*, *thresh* ~ *thrash*, *stamp* ~ *stomp*, etc. share the same etymological origins but that the more vernacular variants have taken on different meanings. The same thing extends to morphological realizations <ow> [ou] and <er>. *Fellow* ['felou] is thus very formal, for instance, "John is a research fellow at Boston University" versus informal *feller* ['fɛləɪ ~ fɛlə] meaning "guy." "He's such a nice *fella/feller*. The latter is even

used to call a dog, “Come here, fella”!¹³ *Yeller*, on the other hand, with rhotic [əɹ] was, until recently, commonly used with the meaning of “coward,” and not the colour “yellow.” Here again, this rhotic [əɹ] pronunciation was certainly proscribed by Franklin (cf. Chapter 14).

2.7 H-Loss

Although the loss of <h> is signalled by Coote (1596), from Suffolk, in the pair *airy-hairy* and by the northerner, Brown (1700) in pairs such as *hall-all*, *and-hand*, *ark-hark*, *eight-height*, *even-heaven*, h-loss is exceedingly rare anywhere in modern American English except when an h-word is unstressed: “Give it to him!” [gɪv ɪt ɪtu əm/ɪm]. This suggests that h-loss was very likely still a marginal phenomenon during the 17th and 18th centuries. There is no sign of h-loss in Franklin’s RMS.

2.8 Bilabial Approximants: <wh- [hw] > w [w]

The loss of [h], i.e. [hw] > [w] appears to have developed in the area of London but only became common in educated London speech after the 18th century, where *whether* ~ *weather*, *weigh* ~ *whey*, *who* ~ *woo*, *whine* ~ *wine*, *which* ~ *witch*, *where* ~ *were*, *whet* ~ *wet* were all perceived as homophones. This phenomenon was common to the areas to the northeast and southeast of London as well. The demographic link with New England resurfaces once again in that one of the characteristics of New England English described by Grandgent (1899) and Krapp (1925) was the loss of aspiration in all words spelt <wh> [hw] (i.e. [ʌ]). Grandgent quotes Lowell (1848, 235) declaring that:

The Yankee “omits altogether” the “h in such words as *while*, *when*, *where*.” This practice has almost died out in New England, even among the uneducated. It is still to be found, however, in Salem and Gloucester... In the words *whoa!* And *why!* The use of w for hw is common everywhere, and wɔəf [i.e. wɔəf] for *wharf* is usual in seaport towns.

I have heard “wharf” pronounced in the New Bedford area (south-eastern Massachusetts) as [wɑ:f]. Nevertheless, Franklin transcribed this older [hw] pronunciation as **hw** everywhere in his RMS and encourages that it should be pronounced in this manner, as does Webster (1789). Considering that it had already been abandoned in London and in Massachusetts, but not in Philadelphia when he arrived there at the age of seventeen, it is likely an attempt on both

13 This extends other morphological realizations such as <ing> [ɪŋ] vs in’ [ɪn ~ ɪ] for instance, highly formal “Good evening darling (‘my dear’), how lovely to see you!” and informal “Hey darlin’ (honey, sugar, etc.), pour me a beer!”

Franklin's and Webster's part to preserve a pronunciation which they judged to be older and thus a purer form of English. Indeed, in the middle and southern colonies, [hw] was retained and still is by many American speakers today. I have recorded natives of Virginia who systematically pronounce <wh> [hw] initially in words such as *when*, *where*, *why*, *whale*, etc. but also in medial position in words such as *overwhelm* [ovəɹ'hwɛlm]. For this last example, my informant is now seventy-five and was raised in Northwestern Virginia. Both her parents were from West Texas.

As mentioned above, Noah Webster was also a strong supporter of this [hw-] pronunciation.

There are many people who omit the aspirate in most words which begin with *wh*; as *white*, *whip*, &c. which they pronounce *wite*, *wip*. To such it is necessary only to observe, that in the pure English pronunciation, both in Great Britain and New England, for it is exactly the same in both, *h* is not silent in a single word beginning with *wh*. In this point our standard authors differ; two of them aspirating the whole of these words, and three, marking *h* in most of them as mute. But the omission of *h* seems to be a foreign corruption; for in America, it is not known among the unmixed descendants of the English. Sheridan has here given the true English pronunciation. In this class of words, *w* is silent in four only, with their derivatives; viz. *who*, *whole*, *whoop*, *whore*. (Webster, 1789, 121)

Webster's remarks about the "Englishness" stand in blatant contradiction to the demographic observations, given that the reduction of *wh* > *w* appears most commonly in New England, the most "English" region statistically, as well as in the region of London. Note in passing that we saw that Dobson (1968, 974) gives a 13th-century pronunciation of *who* as [hɔ] (from earlier [hwɔ ~ hwɔ]) showing that the bilabial glide had disappeared in some words very early indeed.

2.9 Weakening of Final Clusters: <nt>, <nd>, <ld>, <st>, <ng>

In many varieties of English, final stops in consonant clusters must have been weakly articulated such as <nt>, <nd>, <ld>, etc. Dobson (1968, 970-971) provides many examples of the assimilation of /t/ and /d/ after /n/. Bullokar shows the loss of /d/ in *handsome*, while Coles (1674, 1679) says "the d is not at all, or but little and seldom sounded" in *friendship*, *handmaid* and *handsome*. The loss of <t> after <n> is less common but reflects "vulgar speech," He quotes Brown (1700) who matches *kine* ~ *kind*, Strong (1676) for *wine* ~ *wind*, and Hodges (1649) does the same for *rind* ~ *rine* and considers *patents* ~ *pattens*, *gallants* ~ *gallons* as synonyms (or "near alike") while Price (1668) and Brown note *assistance* ~ *assistants* and *patience* ~ *patients* as sounding "alike," as they do now. The Groton town records give *sargin* ['særdʒɪn] "sergeant" (1681).

Lowell offers quite a few examples in his *Biglow Papers* (1848) showing the

back assimilation of [-nd] > [-nn] was common in 19th-century Massachusetts: *can'idatin'*, ['kæniˌdeɪtɪŋ] for "candidating," *stan'in* ['stænnɪn] "standing," *thousan'* ['θəuzən ~ 'θæuzən] "thousand." One can still hear this in American English: "twenty" and "wonderful" pronounced ['tweni] and ['wʌnəfəl]. *Twenny* and *wonnerful* are commonplace in non-standard varieties of English such as the Cotswolds.

In word-final position, this same phenomenon occurs in AAVE. Although some scholars consider that phenomena such as [-nd] > [-nn] a consequence of creolization, the fact is that these early examples provided by both English orthoepists and the Massachusetts town records, a region where Africans were scarce, demonstrates that its existence in AAVE is likely to be an inheritance from 17th-century non-standard contact varieties. Indeed, throughout the 17th century, Africans were still living and toiling side-by-side English indentured servants, especially in places like Virginia. Recall that, contrary to popular belief, slavery, as an official institution, was not officialised until 1661 (cf. Rose, 1999). Prior to that, indentured servants, both white and black, were bought and sold throughout the colonies by professional "soul drivers" (cf. Fischer, 1989). Nevertheless, as stated elsewhere, multi-causation cannot be ruled out in such cases.

Lowell's *Biglow Papers* provides interesting examples such as "nine pence" *nimepunce* ['nəɪn] + [pəns] > ['naɪm.pəns], showing the assimilation of [n + p] > [mp]. "By and by" yields *bimeby* ['bəɪ n'bəɪ] > ['bəɪ m'bəɪ].

In both cases, back assimilation results from the transformation of an alveolar nasal /n/ into a bilabial nasal /m/ when appearing before bilabial stops /p/ and /b/. These kinds of phenomena were common during the first half of the 19th century and certainly in the preceding century and before, especially, in paritary contexts. Such phenomena are still very much alive in spoken English to this very day.

Dobson (1968, 962) cites similar examples showing the weak articulation and elision of the final consonant of consonant clusters, for example, [-ld] > [-ɫ] and [-st] > [-s]: *weal* ~ *wield*, *foal* ~ *fold* (Brown, 1700), *wile* ~ *wild*, *mole* ~ *mould* but also *guess* ~ *guest*, *less* ~ *least*, etc. (Cooper, 1685).

More generally, the weakening of final lenis plosives could explain the tendency in American English to lengthen vowels (in closed syllables) that are normally lax in RP. The obvious conclusion is that this early weakening/assimilation of final stops has its roots in England.

2.10 Final <-ing> [ɪŋ] as *in'* [ɪn]

From a diachronic perspective, the <-ing> ending is a morphological suffix denoting a verbal noun and not a present participle, which it adopted

during the EME period, and which is now one of its principal functions in contemporary English. The disparitary pronunciation of it is [ɪŋ], but the general pronunciation in all vernacular English was and still is (in paritary vernaculars) [ɪn] or syllabic [ŋ].

Historically, *-ing* was used to mark a verbal noun not progressive aspect. For this reason, neither [ɪn] nor syllabic [ŋ] normally stem from a reduction of *-ing* as is commonly supposed, hence the common assumption that it represents “sloppy English” (cf. Ann Houston’s “A Grammatical Continuum for *-ing*,” in Trudgill & Chambers, 1991). Rather, the modern [ɪn] realization results from the reduction of the ME present participle *-ande*, with variant *-ende* [-ɛndə] (> [ɛn]) and *-inde* [ɪndə] (> [ɪn]) spellings in the southern and eastern dialects of England. The distinction between the ME present perfect *-an(de)* and the ME verbal noun morpheme *-in(g)* was maintained until recently in Scottish English. Chevillet (1991, 134) cites this example, which retains a trace of the older system:

- (a) *He’s aye gutteran about* “He’s always pottering about/tinkering.”
- (b) *He’s fond o’ gutterin about.* “He’s fond of pottering about.”

The diachronic path that was followed in the South of England was thus initially *-ende* [ɛnd(ə)] or *inde* [ɪnd(ə)] and, with the assimilation of [-nd] > [-nn] observed in the preceding section, finally reduced to [-enn ~ -inn]. It is the confusion between the [inn] form and the reduced *-ing* [ɪn] pronunciation which progressively resulted in the latter replacing the original present participle from the 15th and 16th century onwards.

Dwight (*Travels*, I, 468, cited in Krapp, 1925) states that Bostonians regularly pronounced “en” for “ing,” *exceeden* or *aspiren* “aspiring.” He (Dwight) states that “This pronunciation I have remarked in most Englishmen whom I have seen, and it may be the prevailing one in England.” Proof of this is seen in Barlow’s rhyme of *alar ming* [əˈlæ:ɪmɪŋ] ~ *chairman* [tʃæ:ɪmɪn]. We saw this as proof of the reduction to [ɪn] in formal poems but also proof that “chair” was pronounced [tʃæ:ɪ] by him, a realization which Willard found thoroughly distasteful.

But the Groton records (Mass.) (1680) give *accordin* for “according,” *finishin* for “finishing.” Krapp adds “It (i.e. [-ɪn]) was undoubtedly formerly a widespread pronunciation, both popularly and in cultivated speech and it has disappeared or tends to disappear from later standard speech mainly through the influence of spelling.”

Krapp’s assumption is supported by Orbeck, who provides a host of examples showing that this tendency may have been the dominant form in Massachusetts during the formative settlement period. This must already have been perceived

as vulgar, however. Nevertheless, contrary to what was stated above, even the historical verbal noun morpheme was now subject to this kind of reduction: *sapline* [sæplɪn] “sapling” (Plymouth, 1663), *herin* [ˈhɛ.ɪn] “herring” (Plymouth, 1700), *shilens* [ˈʃɪlɪnz] “shillings” (Groton, 1682), *shillin* [ˈʃɪlɪnz] (Groton, 1683), *tithen* [ˈtɛiðɪn ~ ˈtəiðɪn] “tithing” (Groton, 1682), *plantinfild* [ˈplæntɪfɪld ~ ˈplæntɪfɛld] (Dedham, 1661). The same is true for place names: *Furinton*, “Farrington” [ˈfʌɪntən] (Dedham, 1670), *Chickerin* [ˈtʃɪkə.ɪn] “Chickering,” *Ocintin* [ˈɒksɪntɪn] “Occington” (Dedham, 1693).

Spellings with <in> [ɪn ~ ɪ] originating from ME *-ende/-inde* are commonplace (but these many of these words could equally represent verbal nouns): *lodgin* for “lodging” (Dedham, 1663), *metin* [ˈmɛ:tɪn ~ ˈmɛ:tɪ] for “meeting” (Groton, 1681), *wachin* [ˈwætʃɪn ~ ˈwa:tʃɪn] “watching” (Groton, 1683), *finishin* [ˈfɪnɪʃɪn] for “finishing” (Groton, 1681), *agreen* [əˈgɪ:ɪn ~ əˈgɪ.ɛ:ɪn] for “agreeing” (Groton, 1683), *takin* [ˈtɛ(:)kɪn] for “taking” (Groton, 1674) (but also [ˈtɛ(:)kɪn] for “taken”), *acordin* [əˈkɒɹdɪn] for according (Groton, 1680), *yoken* “yoking” (Groton, 1679), *cutin* [ˈkʌtɪn] for “cutting” (Dedham, 1663), *cartin* [ˈkæ:(ɹ)tɪn ~ ˈka:(ɹ)tɪn] for “carting” (Dedham, 1661), *setelin* [ˈsetlɪn] “settling” (Dedham, 1701), *katchen* [ˈkætʃɪn] “catching” (Groton, 1691), *willen* [ˈwɪlɪn] “willing” (Groton, 1693), *markin* [ˈmæɹkɪn] for “marking” (Dedham, 1693), *bringin* [ˈbrɪŋ(g)ɪn] (Dedham, 1670) and *goein* [gɔɪn ~ gʊn] (Dedham, 1663). We have already seen the Dedham example of *giuin* (1656) for “going” and which seems to include a [gi-] glide [ˈɡɪ:ɪn].

Finally, we have *ingagin* for “engaging” [ɪŋˈɡɛ:dʒɪn] (Dedham, 1662), *bein* [ˈbɛɪn ~ ˈbi-ɪn] (Dedham, 1656), *belongine*, [bɛˈlɒŋ(g)ɪn ~ brˈlɒŋ(g)ɪn] for “belonging” (Dedham, 1652), *writin* [ˈɹɛɪtɪn ~ ˈɹəɪtɪn] for “writing” (Groton, 1682)... The grammatical function of these would make a fascinating subject of further study!

I explained earlier in this book that the spelling of Benjamin Franklin’s name as recorded in his birth records (Boston, 1706) – *Benjamin Son of Josiah Frankling & Abiah his Wife born 6 Janry 1706* – was most probably a case of hypercorrection on the part of the Boston clerk. Given that “Franklin” was the natural pronunciation (just as it was for *workin’* and *talkin’*), the clerk must have assumed the “correct” pronunciation of Franklin should be “Frankling.” Another example of this kind is found in the Huntington records (NY) where *ruings* [ˈɹuɪnz] is given for “ruins” (1672). The confusion between <-ing> and <in> or even <en> was not isolated and we encounter an interesting case of compensation for the past participle of “chosen” which is “corrected” to *chosinge* by the clerk (Dedham, 1665). These are precious sociolinguistic clues on the part of these scribes.

2.11 -C+V+C > CÇ in Final Unstressed Syllables

Considering the number of early examples, another pronunciation which must have been considered vulgar, then as now, was the pronunciation of unstressed syllables as syllabic consonants: *littl* ['lɪtɫ] (Groton, 1681), *faln* for “fallen” ['fɔln] “fallen” (Dedham, 1675), *presnte*, ['pɹɛznt] for “present” (Dedham, 1674), *streitned* [stɹɛɪtnd] “straightened” (Dedham, 1682), *sufeshntly* [sə'fɪʃntli] “sufficiently” (Groton, 1682), as well as in the place name, “Thurston,” *Thurstn* ['θəɹstn] (Groton, 1681). This kind of reduction of unstressed syllables is commonplace nowadays and obviously has been for centuries.

Other spellings are more difficult to decipher. *Guing* appears to be an attempt to represent [gɪvŋ?] “giving” (Groton, 1685). *Haung* ['hævŋ?] or ['hævn?]) (Groton, 1665) and *warnŋ* ['wæɹnŋ] “warning” (Groton, 1665) may be the same, and appear to be the work of the same clerk. Other examples involve *dackn* ['dɛkŋ ~ 'dækŋ] for “deacon” (Groton, 1685) while Isaac Newton’s transcriptions reveal the same feature, showing that it was already common in his time, even among well-educated speakers: *eatn* ['etŋ] for “eaten,” *abl* ['ɛb] “able” and *wakn* ['wɛ:kŋ] “waken” (Dobson, 1968, 252).

My impression is that, along with vernacular <-ing> pronunciations, rendered [ən] or [ŋ], the dominant realization of unstressed final and medial syllables throughout the colonies (as well as in Great Britain) was largely syllabic, just as it is today in the more paritary registers.

Nevertheless, these occasional syllabic spellings ([CÇ]) are not nearly as plentiful as those in which a vowel is inserted in the following unstressed syllable type ([CVC]). It is obvious to me that the clerks in the New England and New York colonies had a devil of a time coming to terms with the quality of the vowel to insert. In other words, they felt there “should be” a vowel between the two consonants, but they did not know which one to insert to portray [ə] or [Ø]! Compare *littl* (Groton, 1680) above with *letill* [lɛtɪ] “little” (Groton, 1706) or *setelment* ['setɛɪmənt] (Dedham, 1672), *setelmt* ['setɛɪmɪnt] (Dedham, 1679). *Catill* for “cattle” (Groton, 1681) versus *catell* betrays the dilemma faced by the clerks to spell for what they probably pronounced ['kætɪ], just as today.

Of the numerous strategies they adopted, the clerks preferred, by and large, <in> [ɪn] or <en>: *dozin* ['dɹɪzɪn] or ['dɹɪzn] “dozen” (Dedham, 1636), *brokin* ['brɔkɪn] or ['brɔkŋ] “broken” (Dedham, 1656), *unbrokin* [ʊn'brɔkɪn] or [ʊn'brɔkŋ] “unbroken” (Dedham, 1662), *chosin* ['tʃɹɪzɪn] or ['tʃɹɪzn] “chosen” (Groton, 1683), *resin* ['ɹɛzɪn] or ['ɹɛzŋ] “reason” (Dedham, 1662) (Orbeck, 1927, 69) and, finally, *sargin* ['særdʒɪn] or ['særdʒŋ] “sergeant” (with assimilation of final [-t]) (Groton, 1679).

Occasionally, <u>, <o> and <a> served as alternatives. In the following examples, one can almost hear the clerks spelling the word aloud to themselves

as they write: *sargunt* for [ˈsæɹdʒʊnt] for ˈsæɹdʒnt (Groton, 1678), *sargon* [ˈsæɹdʒʊn] for [ˈsæɹdʒn] “sergeant” (note the assimilation of the [t]) in two of the three examples cited. Another case is *titall* [ˈtɛɪtəl] (Groton, 1683) and *titell* [ˈtɛɪtəl] for [ˈtɛɪtəl] “title” (Groton, 1702).

Examples with <a> with a value of [æ ~ ɛ] are also common: *referance* [ˈɹɛfəɹæns] (full form) [ˈɹɛfɹæns] (reduced form) for “reference” (Dedham, 1636), *differance* [ˈdɪfəɹæns] vs [ˈdɪfɹæns] for “difference” (Groton, 1673), *prudænce* [ˈprʊdæns] for [ˈprʊdəns ~ ˈprʊdɹns] (Groton, 1695), *currant* [ˈkʁɹænt ~ ˈkʁɹənt] (Dedham, 1679) and *curront* [ˈkʁɹənt ~ ˈkʁɹənt] “current” (Dedham, 1639).

We shall see in Chapter 28 that Franklin and Stevenson encountered the same difficulty and often adopted the same haphazard solutions as these naïve-spelling New England clerks.

Conclusion

The data presented in Part III (Chapters 16-23) reflect only a fraction of a potentially enormous corpus, but the point here has been to merely give a taste of the complexity and variation that characterized vernacular spoken English during the 17th and 18th centuries. The goal has been to provide insights into both the paritary and disparitary registers of English in both England and the American colonies and, more specifically, to identify Franklin’s own Boston/Philadelphia influenced idiolect. Put another way, and to summarize what has been said in Chapters 10, 11, 12 (Part II, Volume I), the variant forms presented here reflect fragments of the varieties of speech that were imported from England during the 17th century, and which were coalescing throughout the 17th and early 18th centuries to create the new regional American koines. The linguistic elements composing them were thoroughly English and mirrored the status of the speakers and the institutions in which they were most often used. It is the manner in which these features (phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical) were recombined that exemplifies the genesis of American English.

This now sets the stage for Chapter 24, which presents a broad summary of the results obtained in Part III. The data obtained here will be compared and contrasted with the pronunciations Franklin proposed for each of the twenty-six characters in his *Reformed Mode of Spelling*. This, combined with his and Polly Stevenson’s transcribed letters, provide us with a corpus which is sufficiently large to determine which elements of his scheme were inherent to his own natural “American” koine and which were foreign to it, that is, that result from his attempt to mimic an educated London-based system of pronunciation which he hoped would serve as a model for all the subjects of the British Empire, regardless of their regional origins. It is in this way we can describe Franklin not only as a phonetician but also as an orthoepist.

24. General Overview and Conclusions to Part III

Introduction

In Chapters 16 through 23 of Part III, we have seen that the New England feature pool was composed of competing pronunciations of dialect speakers who originated primarily from the southern half of England and, more particularly, from (south)eastern England, the East Midlands and the Southwest, in that order (cf. Chapters 11 and 12). It was the founder generations of these regions whose speech habits coalesced during the first one hundred years of settlement (1620-1725) to form the New England koine. In accordance with the “sharedness principle” as well as sociolinguistic pressures from below (CAT, BLT) and from above (ecclesiastical and governing elites), I estimate that the New England koine had been established by around 1700. By that time, most of the peripheral dialectal features and recessive pronunciations (e.g., /x/ for <gh>, [uɪ ~ vɪ] for <wr>) had largely disappeared. This would place the “stabilization” phase (cf. Glossary) around the time of Franklin’s birth in 1706. As seen in Chapter 14, the New England variety was widely identifiable to speakers from other colonial regions by this time, and vice versa. Webster’s *Dissertations on the English Language* (1789) offers abundant evidence of this showing that regional pronunciations throughout the colonies were well-established and identifiable as such.

Similar processes were observed in the middle colonies (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware) from 1633-1725 as well as in the South (the eastern shore of Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia) from 1607-1700. Nevertheless, in many cases, the loss of these peripheral features was more apparent than real. A good number of these were sidelined for use in purely oral, paritary registers in specific social institutions and never appeared in writing. Some of these features were finally recorded by observers, authors or dialectologists in the 19th century while other traits escaped notice altogether and simply vanished without record of them. This happened with pronunciations such as *utch* for “I” (OE Ic), *Ice* for “I shall” (literally *I se*), *housen*

for “houses” or “a hamlet” (cf. OED for Oxfordshire) and so on.

One must also keep in mind the constant population movements between and within colonies themselves, as well as marriages between people from different regions of Britain and Europe (primarily Dutch, Germans and French). The latter made up less than 10% of the population by the 18th century. This mixing and shuffling of linguistic features was constant and contributed to the linguistic harmonization and dialect levelling that was already underway in England. Indeed, as we have seen, this process had already been occurring in England in market towns around the country long before the settlement of the colonies took place (cf. Chapter 10).

1. Identifying the New England Feature Pool

In this final chapter of Part III, I present a non-exhaustive summary of the major phonetic characteristics which have been discussed in Chapters 16-23. Supported by evidence from the orthoepists as well as concordant data from the 17th-century New England and New York town records, as well as Franklin’s rhyme schemes and dialectal evidence collected in Great Britain and America during the 19th and 20th centuries, I have proposed “phonetic ranges” (cf. Chapter 11, for a definition) for each of Wells’ key words in an attempt to reconstitute the 17th- and 18th-century New England feature pool.

As I pointed out in Chapter 15, Wells’ lexical sets are now an indispensable tool for phoneticians and dialectologists because, as he put it himself, these key words are “intended to be unmistakable no matter what accent one says them in” (Wells, 1988, xviii). As we have seen, this may be (arguably) true today, but this claim does not necessarily hold for past centuries.

The key words have been chosen in such a way that clarity is maximized: whatever accent of English they are spoken in, they can hardly be mistaken for other words. Although *fleece* is not the commonest of words, it cannot be mistaken for a word with some other vowel; whereas *beat*, say, if we had chosen it instead, would have been subject to the drawback that one man’s pronunciation of *beat* may sound like another’s pronunciation of *bait* or *bit*. (Wells, 1988, 123)

While his lexical sets have proven effective for the study of contemporary English varieties, it is also true that when he conceived this system, most English accents had been already considerably levelled. Indeed, by the 1960s and 1970s when the *Survey of English Dialects* was undertaken, most of the last traditional dialect speakers had already passed away. For this reason, I would submit that, if we take the most conservative dialects into consideration, some of Wells’ key words could indeed be “mistaken for other words.” This is especially true when the purpose is to match geolinguistic and diachronic features of past centuries. For instance, what Wells says about *Beat* being pronounced [beɪt] or [brɪt] by some speakers is also true

for Franklin's Boston pronunciation of Wells' *Fleece* words as [fli:s] but also [fle:s ~ fle:s]. The phonetic range of *Meat* words in 18th-century New England appears to have been [mɛ:t ~ mɛ:t ~ mɛ:t ~ mi:t], with [mi:t] being considered substandard by many, including Franklin, at least prior to his stay in London where [mi:t] was now commonplace. This shows that the Type C1... including Franklin, at least prior to his stay in London where [mi:t] was now commonplace. This shows that the Type C1 and C2 models was still strong there, much like a person who might insist on wearing an old dress or suit that has gone out of style elsewhere. In other words, for Franklin, *Meat* and *Mate* were probably homonyms both being pronounced [mɛ:t]. We shall see in Part IV, during his long stay in London, his views regarding this older Type C1 were radically modernized when he conceived this plan for the RMS.

Nevertheless, we also saw that Franklin, like his compatriots, were probably adept at code-switching in accordance with the variety or register of their interlocutors (cf. Giles' CAT). Once again, modern varieties provide essential clues in assessing the credibility of these hypotheses. Wright (1905, 525) shows that Type C1 realizations of *Meat* existed well into the 20th century: [mɛ:t] for Staffordshire, Buckinghamshire and [mɛit] for large regions of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Staffordshire and so on. I recall people born around the turn of the 20th century speaking of ['mɛit ɪ 'pɛ:tɪz] in Deane, Lancashire (meat and potatoes)!

We have also seen that the *Strut-Foot* split had not yet occurred in 18th-century New England and a subclass of *Lot* words had been raised and then shortened to [u(:) ~ ʊ(:) ~ ʌ(:)] by most cultivated speakers allowing them to rhyme words such as *God* ~ *blood*, for instance. These are the kinds of facts that we must keep in mind when evaluating the data below.

In the following summary I have included the ME sources for each of Wells' lexical sets. This has obliged me to reorganize the order in which they are normally presented. In addition, for comparative purposes, I have added a few extra key words on occasion that are not included in his list.

1.1 Reflexes of ME Cardinal Vowels

This section begins with a review of the principal 17th- and 18th-century features of the New England vocalic system. It is followed by an outline of the diphthongal and consonantal system. Many of these traits were shared with the other American colonies for reasons explained in Chapters 11 and 12.

Beside each key word several attested variant pronunciations are given. Again, these are presented in the form of a simplified "phonetic range." For a more complete analysis, I encourage the reader to return to the relevant chapters of Part III. Based on the information available, and insofar as it was possible, I further subdivided the phonetic ranges into innovative and conservative categories. Note that features that were innovative in the 17th century were

possibly considered conservative a hundred years later.

Globally speaking, from a diachronic perspective, paritary features tend to be innovative while the disparitary realizations are often more conservative. Put another way, during the initial period of phonetic change, the innovative features have often been associated with “vulgar” speech (going back at least to the 16th century, e.g. ME /ɛ:/ > /i:/), while the conservative pronunciations were reserved for use in more prestigious social circles. As we shall see, the formerly stigmatized characteristics steadily and systematically tended to gain acceptability in later times among polite speakers. We shall come back to this point in Chapter 28 with regard to the RP phonemic inventory.

This discussion provides us with interesting insights into the sociolinguistic perceptions of language propriety during the 18th century. Taken collectively, these phonetic ranges provide us with the building blocks that permit the identification of the New England phoneme inventory and their allophones/phonetic ranges.

The concordance between social class and concepts such as linguistic “purity” are concepts that frequently recur in Noah Webster’s writings, and to a lesser degree in Franklin’s. I proposed previously (cf. Chapter 13) that this may be one of the reasons why Franklin appears to have consulted only the 16th- and 17th-century English orthoepists rather than that of his contemporaries, most notably Sheridan or Buchanan. I argued that this may be due to Webster and Franklin’s shared belief that England’s linguistic and literary golden age had passed (cf. Chapters 29-30). But it is also true that neither Sheridan nor Buchanan were “Englishmen” and we saw in Chapters 2, 3 and 6-9 that Franklin viewed himself as an “American Englishman.” Even William Pitt the Elder, the former Prime Minister of England, when defending the cause of the American colonists before the House of Lords in 1775, described Franklin in the following terms:

Dr. Franklin is... a person whom all of Europe holds in estimation for his knowledge and wisdom and ranks with our Newtons and Boyles; *who is an honour, not to the English nation only* (my italics), but to all of mankind.

It is obvious that, at least for Whigs, Franklin belonged to the “English nation,” and at the time when “Englishness” was still an ethnic affair. Either you were “English” or not. Pitts’ words here were intended to sway an aristocratic-leaning House of Lords in his favour... but, as we know, Pitt’s attempt failed miserably, more for reasons of Franklin’s politics and humble birth than of ethnic belonging, another kettle of fish!

None of the major 18th-century orthoepists, with the exception of Spence and Elphinstone,¹ were interested in presenting a spelling reform. If Franklin did consult any of the 18th-century orthoepists I have found no record of it (cf. Chapter 14). As we shall see, it is striking that RP London English has adopted so

¹ Elphinstone’s phonetic alphabet was ridiculed by Webster (1789).

many formerly “vulgar” features, pronunciations which tended to be resisted in New England (more on this in the conclusion Chapters 28, 29 and 30).

1.1.1 Price Vowels (*cf. Chapters 16 and 27*)

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /i:/	Price	Conservative [ai ~ æi ~ ei]	Innovative [əi ~ ʏi] [ɔi]	Conservative [ei]?	Innovative [əi ~ ʏi]

Franklin and the New England poets’ realization of *Price* words corresponds generally [əi] (or perhaps [ʏi]). In Chapter 16, I proposed the following scheme for the development of ME /i:/. This would appear to have developed along two axes, the first involving a direct downward movement from [iɪ] > [ai] and the second involving several possible intermediate passages towards centralization.

- a. ME /i:/ > [iɪ] > [ɛi] > [ɐi] > [ei] > [æi] > [ai]

Recall that Dobson (1968) proposed that ME /i:/ went immediately from [i:] > [əi]/[Λi]. I cannot see how this could have occurred without passing through intermediate phases involving centralization. I proposed several possible passageways.

- b. Centralization:

- Once the [ɐi] stage was reached, this diphthong may have been centralized to [əi] and then [ʏi] by Wilkins and Cooper’s time.
- A parallel movement may have followed, perhaps in the same range of dialects, starting with slightly lower [ei] > [ɜi] > [Λi] > [ɔi]. Once [ɔi] was reached, this may have been followed by the lowering of [ɔi] > [ɔɪ].
- A third option is a diagonal move starting from low front [ai] (1550+) > [ɛi] > [əi] > [Λi]. However, this not only contradicts Dobson’s view, but it runs in the opposite direction to the one proposed by him. According to this third model, given that Dobson’s dating of the earliest attestation of [ai] to be around 1550, this would not seem to leave much time for [əi] to have been become the dominant pronunciation throughout the South of England, as he has claimed.
- Finally, once the [ai] stage occurred, backing would then have been a strong possibility, with [ai] moving directly to [ɑi] or [ɔi]. See Figure 16.1 for a synthetic presentation of these different possibilities.

As I explained in Chapter 16, this is a holistic model showing how various shifts would have been possible according to the dialect and the timeframe concerned. As we have seen, 17th- and 18th-century data shows that, in the colonies, the onset of diphthongs was centralized to one degree or another [əi], [ɹi], [ɹi]... We have also seen that, in Franklin's day, *Price* and *Choice* words were homonyms and the New England poets, including Franklin, regularly rhyme words such as *tile* and *toil*. We have seen that English poets such as Pope, Herrick and others were doing the same (cf. Chapters 22 and below). We saw in Chapter 23 (Figure 23.1), that the areas of possible overlap between *Price* and *Choice* diphthongs were extensive cross-dialectally.

Orbeck's evidence suggests that [ɛi] was the dominant pronunciation of *Price* words in 17th-century Massachusetts. I have argued that [ɛi ~ ɛi] was common in the South of England as early as the 15th century (cf. Swardwal's "Hymn to the Virgin," German 2000a, 2001, 2007, Chapter 16). This concurs nicely with Lass' position, who convincingly argues that [əi] was not attested before Hodges (1644) (Lass, 1999, 81), and that [ɛi] was a form that preceded it (and I would add [ɛi] as well). Furthermore, I would contend that, in New England, this older [ɛi] realization was progressively lowered to less prestigious [æi] and then to [ai] in the paritary koine while [əi ~ ɹi] appears to have remained the model in polite speech, just as in London, where it was probably [ɹi ~ əi]. This link with London may explain why [əi] seems to have been more common along the eastern seaboard of the colonies where ties with England were strongest.

By the end of the 19th century, Grandgent asserts that [æi] was the most common pronunciation in the Massachusetts countryside, while [ai] was more popular in urban settings and thus, one can suppose, considered more sophisticated. This alone could explain why [əi] pronunciations and, by extension, [əu] realizations, were falling out of style during the 19th century. The American Revolution and the radically drop in emigration from Great Britain also contributed to this.

Following Mazarin (2020), I concluded that if Wallis, Wilkins and Cooper had this [ɹi] pronunciation, and that they pronounced their short <u> vowels [ɹ], Franklin and the New Englanders very likely did the same. I had come to this conclusion previously by studying Grandgent's precise description of the pronunciation of "whole," one of the key words of the pronunciation of New English short o, which is quite clearly [ɹ], a slightly lower variant of Mazarin's [ɹ]. I have concluded that, in many instances, [ɹ ~ ɹ] may have been in free variation, especially considering that [ɹ] is only a small step above [ɹ]. This coincides perfectly with evidence cited by Wells (1988) and Beal (1999) that, chronologically [ɹ] was a forerunner of [ɹ], a pronunciation which gradually became dominant in Massachusetts in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Grandgent and Lowell, both native Massachusettsans, claimed they had never heard [ɹ] in

their state, only in Connecticut.²

Nevertheless, the *Survey of English Dialects* does show that [ʌi] is still predominant in Norfolk today. For the reasons expressed previously, I have given this [ɾi ~ əi] as Franklin's pronunciation on the grounds that he associated his [ɾ] with short <u> spellings, just as former orthoepists, going back to Wilkins and Cooper, did (cf. Part IV). It is this he advocates in his RMS, a pronunciation that appears to have been common and prestigious along the New England seaboard at the time.³

I also pointed out that, in the first manuscript version of his consonant and vowel table that he sent to Stevenson on July 20, 1768, Franklin also proposed a variant pronunciation [ɒi], which is common today in London and the London area, but also Northamptonshire where his father and his older siblings were from. In the section on *Choice* words, we see that only one <oy> word, "destroyed," appears in his corpus and which he transcribes as *destraayid*. I interpret this to be a muddled attempt to reconcile two competing pronunciations: [ɒi] and [əi ~ ɾi]. The question I ask with regard to *Choice* words below also applies to *Price* words:

- c. Was he hesitating between two London variants [ʌi ~ əi] vs [ɔi ~ ɒi], pronunciations which were in competition in that city during the late 18th century?
- d. Did his own father, uncle and older siblings, from Northampton, already pronounce *Price* and *Choice* words as [ɒi], as is the case today?
- e. Could [ɒi] have been his natural pronunciation as a child (or, perhaps more likely, [ɛi]?) and, if so, did he later adopt the Massachusetts/London [ɾi ~ əi] pronunciation thinking they were more sophisticated?

The answer to the last question is relatively clearcut. We saw in Chapter 16 that, in his poem on Blackbeard the pirate, published in his brother's newspaper, the *New England Courant*, composed when he was only thirteen, he rhymed *die* ~ *manfully* at a time when these pronunciations would have been [əi ~ ɾi]. We have already noted Franklin's rhyme of *destroy* ~ *vanity*, confirming his natural [əi ~ ɾi] pronunciation of all of these words. My sentiment is that Franklin simply included the [ɒi] in his 1768 manuscript vowel and consonant table simply because he heard it around him in the streets of London during the period he lived there (1757-1762 and 1764-1775). Surprisingly perhaps, this [ɒi] variant is absent in Vaughan's edition, possibly because Polly Stevenson, a native of

2 Again, this conclusion is based on the observation that Grandgent's [e] had the value of contemporary IPA [ʌ].

3 I have pointed out that variants of [əi] can be heard in the Ottawa Valley in Canada. This can be explained by the fact that American Loyalists fled to Canada during and after the Revolution and founded English-speaking Canada, bringing this linguistic feature with them.

Kensington, and Franklin's adviser on matters of English pronunciation (cf. Chapter 25), also shared what she considered to be a more prestigious [æi ~ ʌi] pronunciation ([ʌi] being the London realization of it). Yet, the question is whether speakers were really conscious of the distinction between [æi], [ɾi] or even [ʌi] in their day-to-day conversations.

As we shall see in Chapter 28, MacMahon (1998, 464) analyzes the *Mouth* vowel as [ɔ:u] in London while Franklin, in his RMS, records it as **aau** and **aao**. These transcriptions are too similar to be accidental here. In other words, [ɔi] and [ɔu] are in perfect symmetry with each other, just as /aɪ/ and /aʊ/ are in RP/GA today. What troubles me is that Franklin's RMS system is out of kilter in this respect, that is, **ɥi** [æi ~ ɾi] for *Price* words and **aau** [ɔu] for *Mouth* words, where I would have expected **ɥu** [əu ~ ɾu] instead. In Newfoundland, for instance, not only [æi] is the norm but also [əu] and I believe that this was the case for the coastal areas of New England as well. Wise (1948, 118) claimed that [æi] was still heard in Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island, as well as in coastal Virginia during his lifetime. It was recorded during the second half of the 20th century on the island of Martha's Vineyard alongside [əu] (Labov, 1963, 1972; cf. *Linguistic Atlas of New England*).⁴ I do not recall ever having heard this pronunciation in the New Bedford, Fairhaven or Mattapoisett area where I lived during the 1960s. I feel certain I would have remembered it because, this [æi] - [əu] pronunciation immediately struck me when I first heard speakers from the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia's Tidewater region along the Chesapeake Bay and older natives of Alexandria, Virginia, during the late 1960s.

My point is that it appears that Franklin has confused two competing London registers, more popular [ɔi] and [ɔu], on the one hand, and more sophisticated [æi] and [əu] on the other. We have seen that his Boston realization of *Mouth* words was [əu ~ ɾu] not [ɔu], a London realization. What this might suggest is that Franklin may have been trapped in an ongoing shift, similar to the kind Labov observed in New York City regarding shifting variables having different levels of prestige... Once again, this shows that a synchronic analysis cannot ever be completely disassociated from ongoing diachronic processes of change.

As proposed above, parallel to this, an /aɪ/ [æi ~ ai] realization was probably already widespread in the Middle and Southern colonies. In the South it developed into a monophthong, [a: ~ ɑ:], perhaps as early as the 18th century. A parallel development occurred in the North Midlands and North of England more generally and one wonders whether there might be a link here via the influx of settlers from Pennsylvania and Delaware into North Carolina and the Appalachians (cf. Chapter 12).

There is no suggestion that Franklin ever pronounced *Price* words as

4 Hans Kurath, LANE (*Linguistic Atlas of New England*), <http://www.lap.uga.edu/Site/LANE.html>

diphthongal [ai], [æi] or [ɛi] which may also have been a variant in Philadelphia among the Quakers. Recall too that Orbeck states he had little or no firm evidence that [ai] was the value of any of the *Price* spellings in his early Massachusetts town records.

1.1.2 Fleece Vowels (cf. Chapters 16 and 26)

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /ɛ:/	Fleece	Conservative [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] (rare)	Innovative [i:]	Conservative [ɛ: ~ ɛ:]	Innovative [i:]

A surprisingly large number of examples of earlier (i.e. pre-15th century) [ɛ: ~ ɛ] realizations of *Fleece* words appear in the New England town records but especially in the rhymes of New England poets. This feature was clearly recessive and the dominant pronunciation was becoming [i:]. Nevertheless, recessive or not, the number of such rhymes is surprising at such a late date: *tree* ~ *extempore*, *meet* ~ *fate*, *tree* ~ *may*, *unseen* ~ *brain*, *bleed* ~ *spread*... attest to its survival. From a historical perspective, one wonders whether some of the late southern ME varieties may have had two allophones, [ɛ: ~ ɛ]. In certain number of words, the latter [ɛ], a bridge vowel, may thus have been confused with ME /ɛ:/ ~ /ɛ/, thus permitting its retention.

Nevertheless, we have seen from Wright’s EDD that [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] for *Fleece* words were still well attested in early 20th-century England. Orbeck cites examples of *Fleece* words pronounced [ɛ: ~ ɛ]: *strete* for “street” (Plymouth, 1699), *metin* for “meeting” (Groton, 1681), *ded* for “deed” (Groton, 1683), etc., perhaps with a shortened [ɛ ~ ɛ ~ ɛ]. In his RMS, however, unlike in his poetry, Franklin systematically realizes *Fleece* and *Meat* words as [i:] (cf. Chapter 27), another indication that his linguistic model was London-based and that the lowered realizations of *Fleece* words in New England are another example of colonial lag.

Finally, if we accept Franklin’s pronunciation of stressed and unstressed <-y>, <ly>, <-ity>, <-ie>, etc. as [ɹi] (when stressed) and [əi] when unstressed (cf. *HappY* below), we have seen that he frequently rhymed *Price* and *Fleece* words with *HappY* words *manfully* ~ *die* (1719). Rhymes such as *eternity* ~ *thee* raise another question, namely the possibility that Franklin’s *Fleece* words <ee> and <e> words (*thee*, *see*, *free*, *me*, *we*, etc.) may also have had a diphthongal value [ɛi ~ ɛi ~ ɹi ~ əi] variant, as it did in large regions of England in the 20th century (cf. Wright, 1905).

1.1.3 Meat Vowels (cf. Chapters 17, 18 and 26)

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /ɛ:/	Meat	Conservative [ɛ: ~ ɐ: ~ ɐ:]	Innovative [i:]	Conservative [ɛ: ~ ɐ:]	Innovative [i:]

In poetic contexts, there is no doubt that Franklin’s pronunciation of *Meat* words was overwhelmingly [ɛ: ~ ɐ:], far more in line with the Type C1 phase which, according to Mazarin (2020), was typified by Cooper (floruit 1680). This older lowered pronunciation was largely shared by Barlow and Dwight but Orbeck’s [ɛ:] and [i:] examples show that both pronunciations co-existed in the 17th century, suggesting a phonetic range involving [ɛ: ~ ɐ: ~ ɐ: ~ i:] depending on the speaker and locality.

Sociolinguistically, this might be explained by Lass (1999), who showed that the 17th-century London standard preferred [ɐ:] (which I interpret for New England as being slightly lower [ɐ: ~ ɛ:]). The suggestion is that Franklin still adhered to this older model and may have considered [i:] pronunciations to be substandard. However, by the end of the 18th century, the dominant pronunciation of *Meat* words in London was fast becoming [i:] and this is the only realization Franklin advocates for in his RMS, another indication that his model of pronunciation was based on cultivated London English. The older lowered realization of *Meat* words was also favoured in the English basilects/*badumes* where, we have seen, it has survived in many words until the present day.

Also note that, on occasion, high-mid [ɐ: ~ ɐ:] variants were raised to [i:] in words normally pronounced with short [ɛ] such as [gɹi:t] for “great” (e.g. Lord Young, the finest speaker in the House of Commons according to Samuel Johnson; Bowen, 1905) and [di:f] for “deaf,” this last realization being advocated by Webster (1789).

1.1.4 Face Vowels (cf. Chapters 18 and 26)

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /a:/	Face	Conservative [ɛ: ~ ɐ:]	Innovative [ei?]	Conservative [ɛ: ~ ɐ:]	Innovative

Face words appear to be unwaveringly [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. In principle, it has always been accepted that ME /a:/ did not evolve to RP/GA /eɪ/ before the early 19th century. However, while Franklin's *face* ~ *wait* rhymes suggest that the [ei] may have been possible, I have demonstrated elsewhere that, in his case, the general tendency was that both were pronounced with innovative [ɛ:]. Older Massachusettsans continued to pronounce *Wait* words as [ei] and even older [æi] during Franklin's lifetime. Contemporary GA/RP [ei] in both *Wait* and *Face* words can probably be explained by a resurgence of [ei] in *Wait* words (i.e. which had never disappeared in the vernacular) and may have spread to *Face* words by analogy (e.g. *fate* ~ *wait*, both with [ɛ:]/[ei]). For the persistence of [æi] in 17th-century Massachusetts *Wait* words, see below.

1.1.5 Mouth Vowels (cf. Chapters 20 and 27)

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England "feature pool"		Franklin's Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /u:/	Mouth	Conservative [ɔu~əu~ɹu]	Innovative [au?~æu~ɛu] [ɔ ~ ɹ]	Conservative [əu ~ ɹu]	Innovative [ɔu] = London

Like *Price* words, *Mouth* (< ME /u:/) words had multiple variant forms throughout England and the colonies. By the 18th century, it appears that the most prestigious form in the disparitary register in the South of England, as well as in the North American seaboard from Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, down through New England (and Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket) and at least as far south as North Carolina (Ocracoke and Outer Banks) was /əu/. However, Lass (1999, 93) believes [ɔu] was probably the older form. The question then is how [ɔu] shifted to [əu]? We saw in Chapter 23 (cf. Fig. 23.1) that it is more likely that an earlier shift occurred involving [ɔu] > [ɹu] > [əu]. This seems to tie in well with some of the descriptions given by 17th-century orthoepists. Such a movement may have functioned in tandem with a parallel shift with a slightly lower [ɔ] onset of this diphthong, (having an unrounded French realization as in *botte* [bɔt]) drifting over to [ʌ], a shift that would have been slight and natural. The resulting diphthongs, [əu] in the first case and [ʌu] in the other, would explain the diagonal shift [əu]/[ʌu] > [ɛu] > [au], at some point during the early 17th century.

From [au], the raising to [æu] and [ɛu] would have been natural developments. These last two realizations are common not only to the Northeast Midlands of England (Orton & Tilling, 1970), but also to all the 18th-century American colonies.

Indeed, Krapp (1925) claimed that [æu ~ eu] variants were “universal” in the South, “as they once were in the North.” Grandgent (1899) claims [æu] was the rustic pronunciation in Massachusetts in the late 19th century and it still is in the southern Appalachians and the American South. It would be difficult to deny a link in transmission here. As I have indicated previously, [æu] was also viewed as being among a common “vulgar” realization, not only in New England, but also throughout the colonies (Willard, 1828, 1840).

However, Dobson reminds us that short ME o [ɔ] was also raised to the area of [ɔ̄] during the 16th century. Therefore, a variant of the onset of this [ɔ̄u] may have been a marginally raised [ɔ̄u]. If so, the move to a slightly raised centralized variant would have been [ʏu ~ ɤu]. This in turn would show perfect symmetry with [ɹi] which we are quite confident also existed throughout the 17th century and was almost certainly a feature of Franklin’s idiolect.

Yet, this is not at all the description that Franklin gives of this diphthong in his RMS, which is *au* [ɔu ~ au] and *ao* [ɔɔ̄ ~ ɔɔ̄], a pronunciation that appears more akin to late 18th-century London English (cf. Chapters 23 and 27).⁵ As I have proposed in Chapter 23, this *au* [ɔu ~ au] realization does not appear to be Franklin’s natural pronunciation but one that is based on what he heard in the streets of London during his stay there. If so, this would be yet another example of Franklin’s attempt to propose a heteronomous, London-based model for his phonological alphabet, not his native Boston dialect. Having said this, Franklin’s RMS records “flower” as *flaau* [flɔu(ə)ɹ]. The fact that Franklin rhymes *flower* ~ *power* (1740), *flower* ~ *store* (1756), *adore* ~ *power* (1757), etc. suggests this was indeed his native Boston pronunciation. In such a case, the backing and lowering of the central [əuɹ] may possibly be the result of r-colouring. If so, this would be another indication that his /r/ was a post-alveolar approximant and not a trill as proposed by Wise (1948).

The 17th-century Massachusetts evidence shows that several variant pronunciations were common in 17th-century Massachusetts. Orbeck gives evidence showing that some speakers monophthongized certain *Mouth* words: *sothe* for “south,” *droned* for “drowned,” etc. and it is not impossible that this <o> represents a raised monophthongal [ɔ̄ ~ ɤ̄] variant (cf. *Known*, section 1.1.28 below).

I noted earlier that, during the late 1960s, I heard Tidewater, Virginia pronunciations which sounded to me very much like a raised, clipped [øu] in words like “south,” “out,” “about,” etc.⁶ I interpret Shores’ (2000, 179) description of this Tangier Island diphthong (i.e. uh-oo) in his key words *now*, *down* and *sound* as representing [ɬu ~ əu].

5 Many Americans in the “deep South” pronounce it [ˈflɑːə].

6 If I recall this with this degree of precision it is because I found the pronunciation so curious at the time.

The phonetic range of 18th-century Massachusetts may thus have been in the vicinity of [ɔu ~ ʔu ~ əu/əu ~ au] and very possibly already with innovative raised [æu ~ ɛu].

1.1.6 Goose Vowels (cf. Chapter 20 and 26)

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /ɔ:/	Goose	Conservative [u:~u~ʊ~ʏ]	Innovative	Conservative [u ~ ʊ ~ ʏ]	Innovative

We have seen in the preceding chapters that, although *Goose* words were generally pronounced [u(:)], the New Englanders tended to shorten not only high back but also mid back vowels. For instance, Grandgent (1899, 217) demonstrates that many New England words such as *hoof*, *roof*, *room*, *proof*, *soon*, etc. were all pronounced with a “short u,” “similar, in a way” to “short o.” Krapp (1925) produced an impressively long list as well. I have interpreted this to mean a raised version of the [ʏ] analyzed above and corresponding closely to [ʏ] *Foot* words. The vowel for New England short o, on the other hand, may well have been slightly lower (i.e. [ɤ]). Evidence for this is that this key word for the latter was “whole” [hʏɹ]. He matches it with *Hole*, describing its vowel as a clear true mid back vowel [ɔ:] and the <o> of *Whole* as a short slightly advanced (i.e. centralized) version of it, hence [ʏ].

I identified “short u” *Foot* words as having a basic phonetic range of [ʊ ~ ʏ] and perhaps [ɔ] as a variant. They were obviously easily confused with [ʏ] and speakers may have had difficulty distinguishing between the two. They may have easily fused. Historically, we know that [ʏ ~ ʏ] were older pronunciations common during the 16th century. We also know that, according to Dobson (1968), it was lowered to [ʌ] around 1600 in some southern English varieties, the result being the *Strut-Foot* split. In other words, *Strut* and *Foot* would have once shared this [ʏ] pronunciation before the *Strut* vowel descended to [ʌ]. This of course is the model for GA/RP.

Franklin appears to have had this shortened [ʏ ~ ʏ] pronunciation of many *Goose* words (and all the rest analyzed in Chapter 22) which had often been shortened in New England. This allowed him to rhyme *Goose* words with both *Strut* and *Foot* words (cf. Franklin’s *Lot* and *Goat* rhymes below). One of the most surprising of Franklin’s rhymes is *moon* ~ *sun* (1733), which I interpret as having been [mʏn] ~ [sʏn] (I noted, in Chapter 22, that Shakespeare has exactly the same *moon* ~ *sun* rhyme). This is perhaps one of the most curious aspects

of the New Englanders’ 18th-century pronunciations but, as Trudgill (2016) has shown, the same kinds of traits are attested in modern Norfolk English, a sound he presents as phonemic /ʊ/. The precise quality of these vowels remains elusive as the SED records Norfolk’s realization of *Strut* words as allophones of this /ʊ/ which are very clearly [ʏ ~ ʊ ~ ʌ].

Nevertheless, Alexander Pope’s rhymes of *doom ~ come* (“The Rape of the Lock,” 1712), *proved ~ beloved, prove ~ love* (“From an Essay on Criticism,” 1711) (GA /u:/ ~ /ʌ/) demonstrate without any doubt that English poets of the same period were rhyming the same categories of words (Pope was a Londoner). Barnes, Franklin and Dwight all share the same kinds of rhymes. These are precisely the same kind of rhymes that troubled Burton (2010, 60) in his analysis of Barnes’ poetry and which also abound in the poetry of the New Englanders.

1.1.7 Goat Vowels (cf. Chapters 21, 22 and 26)

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /ɔ:/	Goat	Conservative [ou ~ ɔ:] [ʏ] (subclass)	Innovative	Conservative [ɔ(:)? ~ ʏ]	Innovative

Likewise, Franklin clearly has a shortened realization of a subclass of *Goat* words associated with New England short o which are heard in a string of words such as *road, coat, abode, comb, home, bone, stone, whole*, etc. Grandgent claims that, in his day, educated Massachusetts people used this shortened o in about fifty words, but he also said that “rustic” speakers used this New England short o far more commonly. We have seen that the [ʏ ~ ʊ] pronunciation common in a subclass of *Goat* words and that this pronunciation has its roots in the London area (cf. Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, 1387).⁷

As I explained in the passage above, based on the precise description of this short vowel provided by Grandgent (1899: 217) for the *Goat* vowel, I concluded that the value of this shortened “o” vowel was [ʏ]. He also stated that the key word for long [ɔ:] was “hole” (showing that New Englanders did indeed have a long /ɔ:/ phoneme). Yet, we see in Franklin’s *Reformed Mode of Spelling* that he does not indicate length for this [ɔ:] vowel, either by doubling the vowel <oo> (or using a circumflex accent <ô>), as was his custom with <ii> and <ee ~ ê>, nor does he do so for the [u:] of *Goose* words, represented only by his <u> character.

7 I have not looked beyond this and there may be other sources that are even older.

It is difficult to know whether this reflects his own tendency to shorten these vowels (in which case vocalic length of [ɔ] was not salient to him) or whether it was simply an oversight. On one hand, as we saw in Chapter 22, many *Goose* and *Goat* vowels were indeed short in New England, even if all were not. If it is an oversight, it is one of the major drawbacks of his scheme. Linguists such as Wise (1948), one of the most cautious and accurate of them all, assumes that it is the latter. Nevertheless, Franklin consistently transcribes <o> as being short.

As mentioned above, a number of *Goat* words were made to rhyme with *Strut*, *Foot* and *Goose* words but also, far more perplexing, a subclass of *Lot* words (cf. below) which had been raised to [ɔ: ~ u:] and progressively lowered and shortened prior to and perhaps during the 18th century. As extraordinary as this may seem, we have recorded numerous examples of the New England poets rhyming these categories (e.g. *God ~ blood*, *God ~ stood...*). As I mentioned in the last chapter, these *God*-rhymes completely “baffled” Harold Whitehall (1935), who wrote an article on this topic that I discovered after I had finished this book. He provides similar evidence to my own, although he does not specifically identify the vowel as [ɜ ~ ʏ]. The same evidence is touched upon by 17th- and 18th-century orthoepists and, perhaps most importantly, examples from the New England town records and the rhymes of the New England poets. When combined, these sources provide extraordinary evidence validating the existence of a subclass of *Lot* words that were pronounced in the vicinity of [ɜ ~ ʏ] (cf. Chapters 20, 21, 22).

1.1.8 Kit Vowels (cf. Chapter 16 and 26)

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /i/	Kit	Conservative [i ~ i:]	Innovative [i ~ i:ʔ]	Conservative [i ~ i:]	Innovative [i ~ i:ɪ]

Kit words reveal unexpected modulations with regard to expected lax RP/GA /ɪ/. We have already seen that /ɪ/ appears to have three and, possibly, four allophones: a) lax [ɪ] (particularly in unstressed environments), b) tense [i] and c) lengthened [i ~ i:]. These were restricted to specific English varieties and were all found in (stressed) environments. I have argued that a fourth allophone may have developed in England out of the lengthened [i ~ i:] realization that would have led to “breaking,” i.e. [i:ɪ], possibly before the settlement of America, hence *hit*, *ship*, *bit* being pronounced: [hi:t] > [hi:ɪt], [ʃi:p] > [ʃi:ɪp], [bi:t] > [bi:ɪt], etc.

Krapp (1925, 113), Lass (1999, 88) and Mazarin (2020, 4, 19) have proposed that

our modern “lax” vowels were considerably more “tense” in the Early Modern period. In his RMS, Franklin implies that there was no qualitative difference between *seen* and *sin* or *deed* and *did* and that these vowels only differed in terms of length. If so, this may help us better interpret some of Franklin’s rhymes, such as *deep* ~ *ship* which would appear to represent [di:p] ~ [ʃi:p], causing potential confusion with “sheep.” Having said this, Upton and Widdowson’s *Sheep* map (1996, 22) shows that a large part of the Midlands pronounced “sheep” as [ʃɪp] rather than [ʃi:p] demonstrating that, from a dialectological perspective, potential confusion has gone both ways.

Hall (1942) cites an array of Smoky Mountains sources, some from the 19th century, with an <ee> spelling, all of which suggest pronunciations in [i:] or [i:ɪ]: *greased peeg* [pi:g] for “pig,” *steek* for “stick,” *leetle* [li:tɪ] for “little,” *deestric* [di:stɪk] for “district,” *eetch* [i:tʃ] “itch,” *keeck* [ki:k] “kick” and *reaver* [ri:vəɪ] for “river” as well as *dish* with [i(:)]. The spelling of *creek* [kɹi:k] (as opposed to common [kɹɪk]) may reflect the reverse of this tendency. He also transcribes [i:] raised in *fifty* (ibid., 15). Such features appear to stem from older, tense EME /i/ which is well attested in 16th-century eastern England.

We have seen (Chapter 16) that another variant of this tense allophone has survived in British and American dialects, but only in a few examples before /ʃ/, *fish*, *wish*, *dish*, all pronounced [i:ʃ] in regions stretching from southeastern Ohio, Virginia, down to North Carolina’s Outer Banks. It is also recorded in the Northwest Midlands of England (cf. Shorrocks, 1998; cf. the lengthening of short ME /u/ > [u:ʃ] in *bush*, *bushel*, *push*, below).

Also characteristic of 17th-century New England English (the source seemingly being Suffolk and the London area more generally) is the lowering of *Kit* words to [ɛ] in many of these same words: *rever* for “river” and *lettie* for “little” (Plymouth records, 17th century). The Groton records give *reuer* for “river” (1682), *bredg* for “bridge” (1682), *untele* for “until” (1683), *letell* for “little” (1706), etc. (cf. Chapter 16, ME /i/). We have seen that Suffolk was the region that contributed the greatest number of settlers to Boston during the Great Migration. Coote (1596) also gives *bredge* for “bridge,” *mell* for “mill,” *hell* for “hill,” *knet* for “knit.” Daines (1640) gives similar examples for Suffolk as well.

Lowell’s *Biglow Papers* (1848) show systematic transcriptions of “if” as *ef*, “since” as *sence*, etc. which would appear to be inherited from eastern England. I have found no examples of this in any of Franklin’s poems or in his RMS to this effect, but this was certainly part of the original 17th- and 18th-century feature pool.⁸ Suffolk and Essex composed 59% of the Boston population in early 18th-

8 I was surprised to hear a young nurse, born and raised in southern Ohio (approx. thirty years old) systematically pronouncing her /i/ vowels as /ɛ/: [ɛf] for “if,” [ɛt] for “it,” and [ʌnˈtɛl] for “until,” etc. (Montgomery County, Ohio, September 2022). I had never come across this in that State (or noticed it?).

century Boston, with a further 10% from London. This suggests that Franklin must certainly have been familiar with this lowered pronunciation as well.

1.1.9 Dress Vowels (cf. Chapters 17 and 26)

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /e/	Dress	Conservative [ɛ ~ ɛ̃ ~ ɐ]	Innovative [ɪ] (pin-pen)	Conservative [ɛ ~ ɐ]	Innovative [ɪ]

Dress words are often described as having been pronounced high-mid front [ɛ̃] in the 17th and 18th centuries. I would wager that it is probably this high, lax realization that led to the *pen-pin* merger. This is a feature normally associated with the American South, but we have seen that the early evidence shows how widespread it was in New England.

Recall that William Barnes transcribed “men” as [mɛn], but Ellis recorded it as [mm] (Burton, 2010) showing how easily the two sounds could be confused. There is clear evidence that both Benjamin Franklin Jr. and his uncle, Benjamin Franklin Sr., raised words in this class to [ɪ] and rhymes *frind* [fɪnd] (or [fɪi·nd]?) with *attend* ([ə'tɪnd? ~ ə'tɛnd?]). Franklin Jr. also gives *git* for “get.”

We also saw the Frankin’s rhymes of *priest* ~ *rest* (1738) and *priests* ~ *jests* (1735) suggesting that “priest” may have been pronounced [pɹi·st] and that “rest” and “jest” had undergone the *pin-pen* merger giving [ɹɪsts ~ ɹɪst] and [dʒɪsts ~ dʒɪst]... In Chapter 17, I cited the LALME which gives what appears to be an [i ~ ɪ] realization for “priest” in Norfolk, the other in Suffolk (Map 358 “i” in *Priest: prɪst, prɪst*) and in two other locations in the West Midlands. As we have stated previously, it is difficult to know if the *pin-pen* merger was universally applied to all *Dress* words or just to certain categories. My overall impression of Franklin’s *Dress* vowel is that it was prone to raising.

Nevertheless, New Englanders and colonists from other regions must have pronounced the *Dress* vowel in the area of [ɛ] in many words. If so, this could explain the lowering of *Dress* vowels to [æ] in Massachusetts in colonial America more generally. This resulted in doublets such as *thresh* ~ *thrash*, *ketch* ~ *catch*, *wrestle* ~ *wrastle*, *wreck* ~ *rack* (as in “rack and ruin”), *yellow* ~ *yellow/yaller*, etc.⁹ Similar examples are found in large areas of England.

9 The same vacillation occurs for “catsup” [ˈkætʃəp] which is also spelt “ketchup” [ˈkɛtʃəp].

1.1.10 Trap Vowels (Chapters 19 and 26)

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /a/	Trap	Conservative [a]	Innovative [æ(:)]	Conservative [æ(:)]	Innovative [æ(:) ~ ε(:)]

Although scholars who have studied Franklin’s RMS all consider that his *Trap* vowels are pronounced [æ], allowance must be made for the fact that western and northern England have retained the older [a] realizations up to the present day. The shift to [ε:] appears to have been most frequent with reflexes of ME /a:/. American *Trap* vowels tend to have a half-long or long [æ· ~ æ:] realization which might have encouraged this raising as part of the GVS.

Furthermore, even if Franklin pronounced <a> [æ] in most environments, he may have had a slightly lowered [a(:)] pronunciation before /r/ and as well as [-st], [-sk], [-f], [-θ], etc. which, according to Webster (1789), was the dominant realization in New England. In his RMS, however, he has [æ] in all environments where lowering is normally expected (cf. Chapter 19, Sequences 2, 4 and 5). This may be the result of spending so many years in Philadelphia where he was in constant contact with his Quaker neighbours and colleagues in the Pennsylvania Assembly, a majority of whom (to repeat once more) originated from the Northwest Midlands of England where [æ ~ a] appeared in nearly all the environments cited in Chapter 19.

1.1.11 Path Vowels (cf. Chapters 18, 19, 21, 22 and 26)

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /a/	Bath	Conservative [a]	Innovative [æ(:) ~ ε(:)] [a: ~ α:]	Conservative [a(:)?]	Innovative [æ(:)~ ε(:)]

In the West Country and North of England, this vowel is still realized as short [a] which may reflect the original ME pronunciation (hence its classification under “conservative”). In regions where [a:] is raised to [æ:], it is placed under “innovative.” Just as for *Trap* words, all indications are that Franklin pronounced *Bath* words as [æ:], just as in GA today and areas of the English Midlands.

In Part III, I concluded that, just as *Dress* words are raised from [ɛ] to [ɛ̃ ~ ɪ], so *Bath* words were frequently raised from [æ:] to [ɛ(:)] in Massachusetts. This is one of the key characteristics that can be observed not only in Franklin's poems but also, on occasion, in his RMS transcriptions, indicating that this realization was so natural to him that he thought nothing of transcribing "has," "have" and "had" as *hez*, *hev* and *hed*. His rhymes demonstrate that this was a fundamental feature of his idiolect: *west* [wɛ(:)st] ~ *last* [lɛ(:)st] (1749), *race* [ɹɛ:s] ~ *pass* [pɛ:s] (1750), *past* [pɛ:st] ~ *taste* [tɛ:st] (1756), *together* [tə'gɛðəɪ] ~ *rather* [rɛ(:)ðəɪ] (1743). We saw early examples of this such as *peath* [pɛ:θ] for "path" (Hempstead records, NY, 1679) and *piert* [piɛ:(ɪ)t] for "part" (Hempstead records, 1660).

Nevertheless, we have seen that this raised [æ: ~ ɛ:] pronunciation was also advocated by Walker (1791) in certain contexts as a sophisticated variant of [æ]. This fact may have encouraged him to retain this characteristic in his own speech. Although Webster advocated the lowered variant [a: ~ ɑ:] on the grounds that it was the dominant form among Connecticut farmers, it was considered vulgar in 18th-century London. The modern Massachusetts vernacular for *path* and *part* reflects the original [pa:θ] or [pa:t] realization.

Franklin clearly had a penchant for raising *Path* words to [ɛ: ~ ɛ̃:]. Nevertheless, with the exception of his RMS transcriptions of *have*, *has*, *are* with raised [ɛ(:)] and which I consider to result from a lapse in attention during which he reverted to his native pronunciation, he only transcribes <a> [æ] in his RMS, a pronunciation. This may have been reinforced by his many years in Philadelphia, where this [æ:] was not lowered to [a:]. It was preferred in Sequence 2 (<a> + <ss>, <st>, <th>, etc.), Sequence 3 (<nt>, <nge>, <nch>, etc.) and Sequence 4 (<a> + <r>) (cf. Chapter 19). Sequences 2 and 3 are still typical of GA, largely influenced by the English of the middle colonies, but also shared with the Northwest Midlands of England (Shorrocks, 1998), i.e. [æ:] *grass*, *past*, *path*, etc. Ultimately, this trait may be an inheritance of the Quaker founder generation (Pennsylvania and Delaware Valley). Once again, in 18th-century London, this [æ:] was encouraged.

1.1.12 Lot Vowels (cf. Chapters 21, 22 and 26)

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England "feature pool"		Franklin's Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /ɔ/	Lot	Conservative [ɒ ~ ɑ] *[u ~ ʊ ~ ʏ]	Innovative [ɒ ~ ɑ] [a ~ æ]	Conservative [ɒ ~ ɑ ~ a] *[ʏ ~ ʏ]	Innovative [ɒ ~ ɑ] only in his RMS

*Only in a relatively small subclass of *Lot* words

Of all the Massachusetts vowels studied in this inventory, *Lot* words are by far the most problematical. As can be seen by the range of attested pronunciations, identifying Franklin's pronunciation of *Lot* words has been a particularly challenging task. On one hand, we have the "fashionable" 16th-century raised pronunciations of "God," spelt *Gad* and probably realized as [ga:d] (still common in regions of the northern US). At this point ME /ɔ/ [ɒ: ~ ɑ:] fell together with ME /a/ and a number of words were fronted and raised to [æ(:) ~ ɛ(:)] in the 16th century (Görlach, 2012, 598). "Yon," for instance, is spelt *ien* [ien] by Cheke (circa 1540) and Isaac Newton (1661) pronounced "yolk" as *yelk*, a pronunciation advocated by Webster (1789, 123). The SED records [jelk] for "yolk" for Norfolk (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 485). These raised pronunciations of "yonder" have been retained as [ˈja:ndər], for "yonder" in Dorset (Burton, 2010) and as [ˈjæ:ndər] in the Smokies (Hall, 1942) and in Kentucky (German, 2022, personal notes). I found no evidence of this fronted realization in Franklin's RMS.

Franklin describes *Lot* vowels as having a lowered [ɒ(:) ~ ɑ(:)] realization in his RMS (cf. Chapters 25 and 26), a pronunciation that corresponds perfectly well with that described by Grandgent (1899) and other earlier American grammarians including Krapp. In his RMS, he gives key words such as "John," "folly" [ɒ ~ ɑ] as well as "awl" and "ball" [ɒ: ~ ɑ:] (1779) and *folly* [ɒ ~ ɑ] ~ *fall* and *ball* [ɒ: ~ ɑ:] (1768) which differ only in quantity. We saw that it is also in line with the testimonies of 17th-century orthoepists such as Wallis and Wilkins who cite the same minimal pair, *folly* ~ *fall*. The fact that Franklin uses the same minimal pair as they do is one of my main arguments for claiming he had consulted their work. They too claim the vowel is distinguished only in terms of length in the vicinity of [ɒ(:) ~ ɑ(:)]. The fact that the quality of the vowel is [ɒ: ~ ɑ:], and not [ɔ:] as in RP, is proof that the lowered pronunciation, as in GA, is the original English pronunciation of the 17th century. The shortened [ɒ] also appears to have been shared by educated Londoners during the last quarter of the 18th century (cf. Chapters 27 and 28).

I cited a poem dating to 1743 in which Franklin rhymes *John* ~ *own* ~ *done* which in GA would normally be [dʒɑ(:)n], [ɔʊn] and [dʌn] respectively. (See Wright's examples of *love* and *done* (i.e. his "o-like" luv & dùn) in large areas of the English Midlands (Wright, 1905, 518, 408, cf. below).) Based on the analysis provided in Chapters 21 and 22, I concluded that these words were in fact realized in the area of [ɹ ~ ʔ] in Massachusetts, showing that the two representations (i.e. Franklin's RMS description versus his rhymes) are quite distinct. The rhymes would suggest, at least in this poem, pronunciations near [dʒɹn ~ dʒʔn?], [ɹn ~ ʔn] and [dɹn ~ dʔn] while *John*, *own* and *done* would be rendered with <*dʃaan*> [ɒ(:)n], <*on*> and <*dʌn*> [dɹn] respectively in his RMS.

One of the clearest indications that there did indeed exist a subclass of *Lot* words pronounced with a high or high-mid back realization is provided by

Orbeck, who believed it was realized as [u(:) ~ ɤ(:)].

This interpretation of the New England koine realizations of *John*, *own* and *done* corresponds well to Dobson's assessment who believes low-mid ME /ɔ:/, was raised to an intermediate point between [ɒ:] and [ɔ:] which would seem to be in the vicinity of mid /ɔ:/ (although Dobson does not openly state this) with variants in between. In most varieties, this /ɔ:/ was raised to /ɔ:/ or /u:/ and continued to be pronounced in this manner during the 16th and 17th centuries (cf. Dobson, 1968, 671). He adds that "in the course of the 17th century it was narrowed to [ɔ:], at least in the pronunciation of some speakers" (ibid., 672). From here [ɔ:] was shortened to [ɔ] and, in my view, it was slightly centralized in the Midlands to nearby [ɤ] (just below [ʊ]). The presence of [ʊ ~ ɤ] pronunciations for many words in the word classes just indicated are common in Norfolk today (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 1971). There were certainly various shades of variation of this vowel (high or lower, front or back) throughout England and New England (cf. Chapters 20 through 22). To summarize very quickly, Dobson's [ʌ] in many of these words was very probably [ɤ] which an older realization, [ʌ] succeeded it (Wells, 1988, 198-199).

The history of ME short /ɔ/ followed a different path, however and did not involve raising according to Dobson (1968, 536). However, given Orbeck's examples, it would appear that a fairly broad subcategory of formerly short ME /ɔ/ were indeed lengthened and fell together with ME /ɔ:/ words and subsequently raised to /u: ~ ɔ:/. From there, they followed the same course as the latter. Orbeck (1927) gives numerous examples which appear to explain the rhymes of the New Englanders which, initially, I had classified as "imperfect."

Long and short articulations of these words must have coexisted in the 17th and 18th centuries. Certain orthographic clues (final <tt>, <ck>, etc.), favour that the vowel was shortened: *loott* [lɔt] for "lot" (Dedham, 1679, Groton, 1682 and Plymouth, 1686), *bloock* [blɔk] for "block" (Dedham, 1674), *stoock* [stɔk] for "stock" (Dedham, 1673) and *stooped* [stɔpt] for "stopped" (Dedham, 1677) (Orbeck, 1927, 19), etc.

Further reinforcement for this mid vowel [ɤ ~ ɤ] hypothesis comes from Franklin's systematic rhymes of words (GA [ou] & [ɒ: ~ ɑ:]): *sloth* ~ *both*, *cost* ~ *engrost*, *boast* ~ *cost*, *coast* ~ *frost*, *lost* ~ *boast*, but also *abode* ~ *trod*, just as in the works of the English poets cited above. Note that Alexander Pope also rhymes *toast* ~ *lost* ("The Rape of the Lock," 1712), *boast* ~ *lost* (3 examples), *showed* ~ *trod* ("From an Essay on Criticism," 1711) showing that we are obviously dealing with common English phenomenon, not a uniquely New England innovation.

Again, the suggested vowel pronunciations [ɤ ~ ɤ] are perfectly in line with the rhymes of the New England poets studied in the aforementioned chapters. This would explain rhymes with *shop* ~ *cup* by Dwight (cf. *shoopê* [ʃɔ(:)p], Dedham, 1676) and [kɤp] of Franklin's *cut* ~ *put* rhyme, both being realized with

[ɹ]. Orbeck also records *roods* for “rods” (Dedham, 1677), yet another example of a raised *Lot* vowel. If the New England poets’ rhymes can be relied on, “rod” was most likely realized as [ɹɔd]. We saw in Chapter 22 that Whitehall (1935) comes to exactly the same conclusion without going as far as identifying the quality of the vowel.

“Road,” of course, is one of the key words for New England short o cited by grammarians and orthoepists going back to the early 18th century. We saw that Trudgill (2016) and the SED (Orton & Tilling, 1970) transcribe it as /rud/ for Norfolk (but the SED gives [fɹt] for “foot”). Orbeck (1927, 43) records “road” and “roadway” as *rooad* [ɹuəd ~ ɹʊəd ~ ɹɹəd] (Dedham, 1693, Plymouth, 1701) and *rooadway* [ɹuəd ~ ɹʊəd ~ ɹɹəd,wɛi/wæi] (Watertown, 1673). The diphthongized variant of “road” is given by Avis’ as [ɹəəd], which ties in perfectly with Barnes’ mid-19th-century *ruoad* [ɹʌəd] (Burton, 2020).

I demonstrated that a small subset of these *Lot* words were frequently rhymed, such as *God* ~ *rod*, alongside *God* ~ *trode*, *God* ~ *abode*, *God* ~ *road*... Based on these data and the numerous rhymes by all of the New England poets, I have concluded that these [ɹ ~ ɹ̥] realizations of certain *Lot* words were not only common but, at least for some time, relatively prestigious.

Furthermore, we also observed that Shakespeare, Donne, Dryden, Milton and Pope used the same kinds of rhymes. Shakespeare, for instance, freely rhymed *young* ~ *strong*, *none* ~ *gone*, *gone* ~ *alone*, *wrong* ~ *tongue*, *bone* ~ *one*, *gone* ~ *sun*. All these examples were taken from just one source, *Venus and Adonis*, said to be Shakespeare’s first poem, 1593 (/ʌ/, /ou/ or /ɑ:/ in GA today). The common denominator for all these rhymes had to have been something close to [u ~ ʊ] in Shakespeare’s day and [ɹ ~ ɹ̥] by the 17th and 18th centuries. Here too, Whitehall cites virtually identical rhymes, particularly by A. Pope. Recall Wright’s description of *wrong*, *song* being pronounced in the English Midlands with his short ù, which I have interpreted to be [ɹ̥]. *None*, *not*, *stump*, *foot*, *dust*... are transcribed with [ɹ̥] in contemporary Norfolk (Orton & Deith, 1970). This was perhaps the most bewildering challenge that I encountered in this entire study.

1.1.13 *Strut Vowels* (cf. Chapters 21, 22 and 26)

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /u/	Strut	Conservative [ɹ ~ ɹ̥]	Innovative [ʌ]	Conservative [ɹ ~ ɹ̥]	Innovative RMS /ʌ/ = London

It has been pointed out on several occasions that ME /u/ probably remained relatively tense [u] (not [ʊ]) until the end of the 17th century. Lass (1999, 90) asserts that the minimal pair *pool* ~ *pull* was distinguished quantitatively and not qualitatively, a statement reinforced by MacKintosh (1797), who states that the pronunciation of “pull” in his day was still realized as in French “poule,” [pul] (not [pul]). If this is accurate, this would push the date back for the laxing of tense ME /u/ by another few centuries. We also saw a number of cases in Chapter 20 where this ME /u/ was actually lengthened and occasionally confused with the /u:/ of *Goose* words. This long realization has survived in the contemporary dialects in both England and America in a number of limited contexts such as before /ʃ/, where Shorrocks gives examples with [ɹ:] for Lancashire. From Ohio to Ocracoke, North Carolina it is realized as [u:] for *bush*, *push*, etc. which I see as a simple back version of front /i:/ in *wish*, *fish*, *dish* in precisely the same regions of America and England.

Nevertheless, I concluded that *Strut* words and *Foot* words had not yet split in Massachusetts during Franklin’s lifetime, a situation which existed well into the 19th century, and the *Strut* words were still pronounced [ɹ], just as was suggested by Wells (1988, 198-199). For reasons explained above, *Foot* and *Strut* words were pronounced in the neighbourhood of [ɹ] throughout the 17th and much of the 18th century at a time when many speakers had not yet adopted the fully lowered and centralized [ʌ] variant in words like *come*, *done*, *won*, *son*, *sun*, *run*, etc.

It is unlikely then that Franklin was considering this innovative [ʌ] to represent his *u* for his *Reformed Mode of Spelling*. Furthermore, he claims that it should be pronounced like <u> in words such as in *umbridge*, *unto*, etc. at a time when we know it was pronounced [ɹ] or [ʊ]. As I have stated repeatedly, support for this [ɹ] variant is provided by Orton and Tilling (1970) who record it for Norfolk but also by Trudgill (2016) who transcribes *Strut*, *Foot* and *Comb* words with phonemic /ʊ/ for both his native Norfolk and Suffolk. We saw that [ɹ] is one of the dominant pronunciations for this class of word in that key region.

We have seen that this [ɹ] corresponds quite closely to Wright’s <ù> which he describes as sounding acoustically like <o> (1905, 17). Wells (1988, 198-199) supports this analysis for the East and West Midlands. Wright (1905, 518) records *luv* [lʊv] “love” for Northumberland, Durham, Cumbria Lancashire, Staffordshire, Lincolnshire, Rutland, Leicestershire, Buckinghamshire, but also *lùv* [lɹv ~ lɹvʔ] for Lancashire, Cheshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire. He also gives *dùn* [dɹn] “done” for Lancashire, Isle of Man, Cheshire, Flintshire, Denbighshire, Staffordshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire (Franklin’s father’s home region), Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire (Wright, 1905, 408). There can be little doubt that New Englanders shared a similar [ù]-[ɹ]

pronunciation of *love, above, done, come, home*, etc. (cf. Chapter 22).

Once again, similar raised realizations abound in 16th-, 17th- and 18th-century English poetry. Alexander Pope, for instance, has no trouble pairing *none* with *own* (recalling Franklin’s *John ~ own ~ done* rhyme) or *love* with *Jove* (“From an Essay on Criticism,” 1711). Consider Pope’s *sun ~ upon*, also in his “From an Essay on Criticism” as well as *tongue ~ long* (“The Rape of the Lock,” 1712) (= GA /ʌ/ ~ /ɑ:/). Robert Herrick, like the New England poets, matches *come ~ home* (“Corinna’s Going a-Maying,” 1648) (GA /ʌ/ ~ /ou/).

In the context of this discussion, I cited Beal (1999, 135-137), who quotes Jones’s account of a “smothered u” (Jones, 1991, 20). My conclusion is that, in eastern England and in Massachusetts, [ʏ ~ ʊ], and variants of these, were common for both categories of word, perhaps with occasional retracted or backed short variants.

I also noted the fronting of ME /u/ > [ɪ] or [ɛ] which occurs quite commonly in words like *just, judge, such* and *much*, etc. This can be traced to 15th-century southern England. Franklin’s rhyme of *dressed ~ just*, which he spells *drest* [dɹɛst] and *just* [dʒɛst], is a good example of this, even though it is not always obvious from the spelling.

He’s but a caterpillar drest.
The gaudy Fop’s his picture just.

Given Franklin’s own pronunciation of “just” here as [dʒɛst], he may well have pronounced *much* and *such* as [mɛtʃ] and [sɛtʃ] in his informal, paritary register. Lowell, also from Boston, writes *sech* in his Biglow Papers (1848)!

1.1.14 Foot Vowels (cf. Chapters 21 and 26)

ME source	Key word	17th -century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /ɔ:/	Foot	Conservative [u: ~ u]	Innovative [ʊ~ʏ~ʊ~ʌ]	Conservative [ʏ ~ ʊ]	Innovative

*[ʏ ~ ʊ] in relation to [v] cf. Wells, 1988

I have just stated that the *Strut-Foot* split was resisted in a stretch of the East and West Midlands extending from Lincolnshire to Gwent and Herefordshire (Parry, 1999). As previously stated, this “o-like” [ʏ] was brought to Massachusetts and was commonplace until the 19th century when, under the pressure of public education, it was gradually stigmatized and discouraged. Franklin certainly shared a pronunciation identical or close to this.

To repeat, in Norfolk, *Foot* and *Flood* are both recorded by the SED as [fɹʏt] and

[flʏd] while in nearby communities it has been lowered and centralized to [fʌt] and [flʌd] (cf. Orton & Tilling, 1970, 814, 424). Grandgent (1899) distinguishes between *Foot* words, which appear to have a vowel close to New England short o. Given that he very specifically describes <ò> as an advanced version of the [ɔ] of “hole,” this can only be [ʏ]. Key examples are *stone*, *road*, *home*. Trudgill transcribes all three of these as having /ʊ/ in Norfolk. We have seen that the SED proves that [ʏ] is an allophone of /ʊ/ along with [ʊ] and [ʌ]. He also gives /stʊn/, /ʊd/, /hʊm/ as having the same vowel as “wood” /wʊd/, “foot” /fʊt/, “comb” /kʊm/, etc. The New England poets, including Franklin, considered all these words as being sufficiently alike to rhyme them without any hesitation. This led me to the conclusion that Grandgent’s description of *Foot* words being “similar, in a way,” to his [ò] [ʏ], must be interpreted to mean that this vowel was close to [ʏ] or perhaps [ʊ], but not yet [ʌ].

To conclude this summary, I also pointed out how these examples are also present in Lowell’s *Biglow Papers* (1848): *holl* [hʏl] (14 examples) for “whole,” *hum* [hʏm] for “home,”¹⁰ *stun(s)* [stʏn(z)] for “stones,” *grave-stun* [grɛ:v.stʏn] for “grave-stone,” *wunt* [wʏnt] for “won’t” (but also “wont”). Recall, however, that Grandgent (1899, 217) rejected the *hum* spelling of “home” stating that it is “doubtless intended to represent *hòm* not *həm* although [ɐ] is actually used in Connecticut.” We have seen that *hòm* is clearly [hʏm]. These examples show unbroken linguistic continuity between the early colonial New England English and the 19th-century New England dialect that resulted from the long process of koineization (cf. Chapters 11 and 12) as well as a direct connection with southeastern England (Norfolk, Suffolk, etc.).

1.1.15 Palm Vowels (cf. Chapter 19, cf. Path words above)

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /a/	Palm	Conservative [æ:]	Innovative [a: ~ ɑ:]	Conservative [æ:]	Innovative

Likewise, Franklin’s *Palm* words all appear to have [æ:]. In his RMS, for instance, he transcribes “calm” in his orthography as ***kalm*** which represents [kælm], with the preservation of the /l/ before /m/. We have seen that on Tangier Island, Chesapeake Bay (Shores, 1984) and in the Smokies of Tennessee (Hall, 1942), it was still pronounced [kæ:m] (and “balm” [bæ:m]) by older speakers

10 “MISTER BUCKINUM, the follerin Billet was writ *hum* by a Yung feller” (*Biglow Papers*).

(i.e. those born around 1860). Note also that, in his RMS, Franklin systematically conserved his postvocalic /l/ in words such as *would*, *should*, *could*, cf. Chapter 25. If this is not a hyper-correction, this would be an obvious holdover from the 17th- and 18th-century colonial koinés. It is very probable that lowering and/or lengthening of ME /a/ > [a:] in both *Bath* and *Palm* words was also part of the Massachusetts feature pool. Contrary to Webster (1789), however, Franklin appears to have preferred the raised [æ:] pronunciation both these key words.

1.1.16 Taught Vowels (cf. Chapter 21)

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /aχ/	Taught	Conservative [ɑ: ~ ɒ:] [ɒɔ]	Innovative [ɔ:]	Conservative [ɒ: ~ ɑ:]	Innovative

On the basis of the observations by Kenrick (1773), Nares (1784), Walker (1791), MacKintosh (1797), Duponceau (1818), Grandgent (1899), who consistently associate <au> in *Taught* words (*haul*, *law*, *caught*) with French *pâte*, or *âge*, I concluded that it could only have been [ɑ:] with a slightly lower variant [ɒ:], not necessarily phonemic. In other words, I have the impression that, to an English ear at the time, French [ɑ:] of *pâte* may have sounded to certain speakers, unfamiliar with spoken French, like an English [ɒ:]. Sir William Jones’ portrayal of the French *la* [la] and *a/à* [a] as *law* and *aw*, seems to suggest [ɒ] and [ɔ] (Jones, 1786). I therefore concluded that *Taught* words were not realized as /ɔ:/ as previously imagined but rather as [ɒ: ~ ɑ:].¹¹

I pointed out that Mazarin (2020) presents convincing evidence that RP /ɔ:/ is a “new British vowel” and a “break in tradition,” that is, an innovation that arose in England during the “late 1800s.” This vowel was codified by Daniel Jones in the 1917 edition of his *English Pronouncing Dictionary*. Nevertheless, I am convinced that [ɔ:] must have existed as a dialectal variant well before the late 19th century. As Mazarin points out, the Americans ([ɑ: ~ ɒ:] and Australians ([ɒ:])) would have preserved the oldest variants of the original sound. I explained in Chapter 21, American linguists such as Krapp (1925) interpreted the [ɔ:] symbol as [ɒ:].

In support of this, Dobson (1968) records [ɒ:] for the EME period for *Taught* words. We saw in Chapter 20 that Krapp records this vowel as an “unrounded” /ɔ:/, which I have argued (cf. Chapter 21) corresponds to modern IPA /ɒ:/. He uses

11 *La mort a des rigueurs à nulle autre pareilles* (“Law more aw day reegyewrs aw nool otruh parellyuh”).

no other symbol for this [ɒ:] sound than [ɔ:], but he passes directly to /ɑ:/ which argues in favour of this premise. I further asserted that it is not impossible that the phonemic boundary between /ɑ:/ and /ɒ:/ had been eroded as early as the 18th century, although it did remain phonemic for some speakers in New England until the 20th century (perhaps as a result of formal schooling?). The difference between *caught* and *cot*, for instance, was very slight and, to my ear, the distinction is barely audible (German, personal notes, New Bedford area, Massachusetts, 2014). This phonemic distinction in American English is clearly on the wane as both Wells (1990, 2005) and Roach (2012) have rightly stated.

My suspicion is that the Americans have always had this older [ɑ:] < ME /axt/ words and that the oscillation between [ɒ:] and [ɑ:] probably arose at some point during the EME period.

Note Dobson's observation that Wallis recommended diphthongal realizations *wau'k* and *tau'k* for "walk" and "talk" (Dobson, 1968, 554), a pronunciation which may be the source of [wɒk] and [tɒk] in Appalachia. I have found no evidence of this diphthongal realization in the 17th-century town records, however, nor in Franklin's RMS. Nevertheless, we saw that, Shorrocks records this diphthongal pronunciation as [ɛɪ] for Bolton, Lancashire.

Based on these facts, I consider that Franklin probably pronounced *taught* as [tɒ:t] and possibly as [tɑ:t], as Grandgent suggests in his own description of *caught* (albeit 100 years later), where he stresses that "the tongue goes down as far as it will go." Unlike the high and mid back vowels, I believe Franklin's [ɒ:] vowel was long in all environments, even if he rarely indicates length in his RMS with the exception of /i:/ and /ɛ:/. The very fact that the **a+a** are fused characters suggests that he conceived the sound as being inherently long. There are several reasons for this conclusion: the first is his transcription of "brought" (in his July 20, 1768 letter to Polly Stevenson) where indicates the two vowels separately, **braat** ([bɾɒ:t ~ bɾɑ:t], as in GA) (cf. Appendices 2 and 3) but also the fact that he doubles his fused **aa** before <ll> "all" (i.e. **aal**) which he must have felt that it was exceptionally long (cf. Chapter 26). Nevertheless, he says nothing about this in his RMS descriptions of the vowel (cf. Chapter 26).

1.1.17 Square Vowels (cf. Chapters 19 and 26)

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England "feature pool"		Franklin's Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /a(:) r/	Square	Conservative [æ:ɪ]	Innovative [ɛ:ɪ~əɪ~i:ɪ?]	Conservative [æ:ɪ]	Innovative [ɛ:ɪ]

In the early 16th century, the pronunciation of the *Square* key word was realized as [skwæ:ɪ] and was raised faintly higher to [skwɛ:ɪ] during the following century, probably after 1650. However, contrary to what is generally thought, the [æ:ɪ] pronunciation lingered on for much longer than has been generally thought. I found that Franklin, Barlow and Dwight all appear to have wavered between [æ:ɪ ~ ɛ:ɪ] realizations, but it seems to be the more conservative [æ:ɪ] pronunciation that Franklin advocates for his RMS. It is also the realization of this rhyme that seems to come out on top.

Confirmation of this [æ:ɪ] realization appears to be found by Willard (1828/1840) in Massachusetts who states that the vowel of “care” was pronounced like the [æ] of “carry” and “can.” The New England poets shift back and forth between both realizations demonstrating that both sounds coexisted in the feature pool until, during the 19th century when the [ɛ:ɪ] variant finally won out. Krapp (1925) also makes the same point.

Duponceau (1818) already associated this [æ:ɪ] pronunciation with the Virginians in words such as *there*, *stairs*, etc. showing that this realization must have been common throughout the colonies at one time. It still persists in the Appalachians (*there*, *bear*, etc.) and is generally considered to be a “relic” pronunciation. Lowered variants, such [ðɑ:ɪ] and [ba:ɪ] were common until recently but also in New England. This also explains the New England poets’ frequent rhymes of *Square* [skwæ(:)ɪ] words with *Start* words (*war*, *star*, *tar*, *car*), all of which were pronounced [æ(:)ɪ].

Nevertheless, Lowell’s *Biglow Papers* show that New Englanders were still confusing some *Square* words with innovative pronunciations of *Meat* words. In other words, once the [æ:ɪ] was raised to [ɛ:ɪ], for some speakers, it then merged together with *Meat* words and was progressively raised to *skeer* [ski:(ɪ)] for “scare,” *skeerce* [ski:(ɪ)s] for “scarce” but also *cheer* for “chair.” This, I suspect, was not a recent development and had been around for some time.

Likewise, words such as *heard*, *her*, *were*, *reverse*, were commonly pronounced [hɛɪd], [hɛɪ], [wɛɪ], [ɪɛˈvɛɪs] during the 17th and 18th century. *Heard* followed the GVS [ɛ:] > [i:], hence spellings such as *heerd* [hi:ɪd] for “heard” (Watertown, 1677), *Steernes* [sti:ɪn] for “Stearns” (Watertown, 1647), *heer* [hi:ɪ] for “her” (Watertown, 1671), *weer* [wi:ɪ] for “were” (Plymouth, 1649, Watertown, 1670) and *reveers* [ɪɛˈvi:ɪs] for “reverse” (Watertown, 1671) (Orbeck, 1927, 31).

Other common examples were *great*, realized as [gɪi:t], and *deaf* [di:f]. Note that Lowell also gives *heerd* [hi:ɪd] and *heern* [hi:ɪn] for “heard.” [hi:ɪd] was the dominant pronunciation in Appalachia until recently. These kinds of examples demonstrate clear continuity between 17th-century and 19th-century American English and 17th-century and southern English dialects. Nevertheless, I have found no such pronunciations in any of Franklin’s poems and certainly not in his RMS although all the above must have been commonly heard in the streets

of Boston during his youth. Considering his prescriptive views on “correct English,” these realizations were an anathema to him.

Centralized variants existed for many of these same words. “Were,” for instance, was spelt *wur* [wəɪ] in the 17th-century Massachusetts town records (as in contemporary GA), but the “polite” pronunciation was *wear* [wɛɪ] until the early 19th and 20th centuries. It is this pronunciation that has been taught in schools internationally since the beginning of the 20th century. The route taken here involved the lowering of [ɛɪ] to [æɪ]. From there it was lowered even further to [aɪ] or [ɒɪ] and then finally centralized to [ʌɪ ~ əɪ]. As seen above, this shows the opposite treatment observed for “were” as [wiɪ]! I would conclude that all of these are good examples of “dialect mixture” described by Trudgill (2008) but which I consider to be merely the first stage of the koineization process (cf. Chapter 12).

1.1.18 Start Vowels (cf. Chapter 19)

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /ar/	Start	Conservative [æ(:)ɪ]	Innovative [a(:)ɪ ~ ʌ(:)ɪ]	Conservative [æɪ]	Innovative

The major distinction between *Square* and *Start* words is that *Square* words were raised from [aɪ] to [æɪ ~ ɛɪ] while *Start* words were either raised and lengthened in many varieties to [æɪ] or lowered to [a(:)ɪ] and, eventually, backed to [sta(:)ɪt]. With r-loss and compensatory lengthening and further lowering, this has given [sta:t] in RP, but [sta:t] in modern Massachusetts, where it has remained stationary since the 17th century. The GA realization is [stɑt].

In both his RMS and his poetry, Franklin’s pronunciation was uniformly [æ(:)ɪ] in words such as “far” [fæ(:)ɪ], “hardly” [ˈhæ(:)ɪdli], but also in his rhymes of *War* ~ *bare* (1739), both realized as [æ(:)ɪ]. Recall that Shorrocks transcribed “tar,” “war,” “star” with [æɪ] for Bolton, Lancashire. This recalls Whitehall’s surprise at the concordance between contemporary Lancashire pronunciations and 18th-century New England pronunciations. Without knowing it, I came to the same conclusion he did back in 1935, namely, that this [æɪ] pronunciation of words like *war*, *tar*, *star*, etc. was formerly a common realization in large areas of England and, very likely, widespread in Pennsylvania and Delaware too, where West Country Quakers had settled. Krapp (1925) also contends that “war” was pronounced [wæɪ] in colonial America. When one looks at the characteristics of conservative Lancashire dialect, we are often dealing with pronunciations corresponding to

Mazarin’s Type A varieties that go back to the 15th century, e.g. [bɹi:t] for “bright,” [li:t] for “light,” or Type B realizations such as [wæ:ɹ] (1550-1675).

Nevertheless, words beginning with bilabial approximant <w> [w-] or aspirated <wh> [hw-] provoked lowering at an early date. Recall once again that, in careful speech, <w> was vocalic, that is [u-] (cf. Chapters 23 and 27). The lowering provoked by <w> is encountered in spellings of “wharf” and “warn” as *whorf* and *worn* in the 17th-century Plymouth records, suggesting that these were pronounced [ɒ(:)ɹ] in the vernacular, whereas “polite” speakers would have been expected to pronounce these as “wharf” [(h)wæɹf] and “warn” [wæɹn] or, perhaps with slightly lowered [(h)wa(ɹ)f] and [wa(ɹ)n] respectively. Franklin appears to have favoured the older, but apparently more prestigious [æ(:)ɹ] interpretation. The New England feature pool contained the entire range of realizations from [æ(:)ɹ ~ a:(ɹ)] ~ [ɑ(:)ɹ] ~ ɒ(:)ɹ during the 17th century. The formerly vulgar lowered pronunciation, once again, eventually won the day. In contemporary Massachusetts, traditional speakers will pronounce “wharf” and “warn” [wa:f] and [wa:n].

1.1.19 North Vowels

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /ɒ(:) r/	North	Conservative [ɒ(:)ɹ ~ ɒ(:)ɹ]	Innovative [ɔɹ]?	Conservative [ɒɹ]	Innovative [ɒ:]

In his *Reformed Mode of Spelling*, Franklin proposes <*aar*> [ɑ(:)ɹ ~ ɒ(:)ɹ] for key words such as *North* and *Force*. As early as the 17th century, these words were already pronounced as r-less [nɒ:θ ~ nɑ:θ] in “vulgar” Massachusetts English, just as it is today in older traditional Massachusetts speech. According to Grandgent (1899), this lack of rhoticity appears to have become a dominant feature of Massachusetts English by the mid-19th century with Lowell (1848) spelling *north* as *no’t*h in his *Biglow Papers*. However, post-vocalic /r/ remained the rule in disparitary American English and Franklin and the New England poets pronounced this in their poems, and Franklin and Webster argued that it should be pronounced postvocalically.

I have proposed that Franklin probably continued to pronounce *word*, *worth*, *worse*, *world* and *work* as intermediate [wɒɹd], [wɒɹθ], [wɒɹs] and [wɒɹld], [wɒɹk] respectively and not with their centralized equivalents, even if the latter realizations were common as early as the 17th century (town records). Scattered 17th-century spellings such as *forst* [fɒɹst] for “first” and *aformative*

[a'fɒɹmətɪv] for “affirmative” suggest that [ɒɹ] marked a stage on the path toward centralization. There are suggestions that <ir> > [ɹɪ] were also possible (cf. Lodwick’s *Lord’s Prayer*, Chapter 13).

1.1.20 Nurse Vowels (cf. Chapters 16 and 21)

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /ur/	Nurse	Conservative [ɹɪ?] [ɒɹ]	Innovative [ɛ:ɪ] [əɪ] [ə: ~ ɜ:]	Conservative [ɒɹ]	Innovative [əɪ ~ ɹɪ]

Consider Franklin’s frequently rhymed *North* and *Nurse* words: *horse* ~ *purse* (1735), *worse* ~ *curse* (1735), *turn* ~ *burn* ~ *adorn* (1748), *mourn* ~ *return* (1743) and also *worse* ~ *discourse* (1736). I concluded that *Nurse* words must have been realized as [ɒɹ]. More generally, however, *Nurse* words appear to have undergone at least two other early 17th-century changes which included a shift to [ɹɪ] but also [ɛɪ] (as in modern Scots) on the model of ME /ir/ and /er/ words (cf. *Girl* below).

The New England town records give examples of a fronted low-mid [ɛ] pronunciation (of *tern* [tɛɪn] “turn” (1694), *teret* [t'ɛɪɪt] “turret” (1708), *retern* [ɹɛ'tɛɪn ~ ɹɛ'tɛɪn] “return” (1709)), which may have fallen together with *herd*, *heard*, *mercy*, *merchant* words, perhaps on the model of <u> [ʌ ~ ɹ] > [ɛ] or [ɪ]: *sech* / *sich* for “such,” *mech* / *mich* for “much,” [jɛdʒ] “judge”...

1.1.21 Girl Vowels (Chapter 16)

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /ir/	Girl	Conservative [ɛɪ ~ æ:ɪ] [æ:] “gal”	Innovative [ɹ:ɪ] [ɹ: ~ ɜ:] [ɒɹ] > [əɪ]	Conservative [ɛɪ ~ æɪ]	Innovative [ʌɪ]

Girl is not included among Wells’ lexical sets, but its presence here provides an interesting example of variation and parallels with *Nurse* words above. The data presented in Part III demonstrates <ir>, <er>, <ear> + C(C) spellings in words such as *girl*, *bird*, *birth*. I found variant spellings of “girl” a few lines

apart written by the same clerk in the Southold town records for the year 1698, namely, *gairle*, and *garle* which probably represent either [gɛɹl] or [gæɹl]. As we have previously seen, the non-rhotic variant of [gæɹl] gave modern American vernacular “gal” [gæ:l], still common in American English. The following examples were recorded by Orbeck (1927, 32): *gerl* [gɛɹl] (Plymouth, 1642), *gearl* [gɛɹl] (Dedham, 1701). Centralized *gurl* [gʌɹl] pronunciations certainly existed as early as the 17th century. Two centuries later, Duponceau (1818, 252) recorded “bird” as [bæɹd] and “bard” as [bæ:ɹd]. This is also borne out in 1848 by Lowell, who spells “birthright” *barthright* [ˈbæɹθɹɪt] in his *Biglow Papers*. It is likely that Franklin pronounced these <ir> words as [æ:ɹ].

1.1.22 Mercy Vowels (Chapter 16)

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /er/	Mercy	Conservative [ɛɹ ~ æ:ɹ] [æ:]	Innovative [əɹ] [ə: ~ ɜ:]	Conservative [ɛɹ ~ æɹ]	Innovative [əɹ]

Mercy is a key word that has received much attention from linguists. Lowell spells “earth” *airth* [ɛɹθ]. Duponceau shows that there was also fluctuation between [ɛɹ], [æɹ] and [əɹ] in words like *mercy* and *merchant*, but he favored the [ɛɹ] in these words. He goes on to say that it was frequently pronounced [æɹ] which, though less sophisticated, was considered to be superior stylistically to the centralized [əɹ] variant, which he rejected as “vulgar.” The opposite was true in London (Trapateau & Duchet, 2019) where [əɹ] was preferred to [æɹ], considered low-class. If so, this difference in judgement between educated Londoners and Americans reveals the first signs of a growing sociolinguistic gap in judging linguistic propriety.

The [æɹ] realization of <er> words was very probably Franklin’s natural pronunciation of such words and proof of this seems to be revealed in his RMS. In his attempt to respect local London usage, Franklin systematically adopted the centralized London pronunciations of <er> words, for instance, *lyrn*, *lyrnin* for “learn” and “learning,” etc. However, he forgot to adapt one errant transcription to his London RMS system (i.e. *ynlarn’d* [ɹnˈlæɹnd]), which I take to be an absent-minded slip back into his natural Boston pronunciation. Another case is his spelling of “there” as *ðaer* in which he confuses [ðɛɹ] and [ðæɹ] pronunciations (cf. Chapters 25 and 27). Without the evidence assembled in Part III, we would not have the ability to compare the New England and London data.

Words such as “hearth” and “heart” were also pronounced [hæɹθ] and [hæɹt],

the latter being often spelt *hart* in the 17th-century town records. This realization allows Franklin to rhyme “heart” [hæɪt] with “desert” [dɛˈzæɪt] (with a stressed final syllable as in French), or perhaps [dɛˌzæɪt] when reading a poem aloud.

All Fame is foreign but of true *Desert*,
Plays round the Head, but comes not to the *Heart*. (1748)

Very likely, while in America, Franklin would also have favoured the [ɛɪ ~ æɪ] pronunciation of these words but, once again, it must be remembered that when he proposed his RMS, he had been living in London for ten years at a time when the innovative centralized pronunciations were spreading quickly and becoming more acceptable in London. For this reason, Franklin systematically records <*yr*> in his RMS. Interestingly, it had not yet gained acceptance among cultivated speakers and Kenrick (1773), Nares (1784), Webster (1789) and Walker (1791) all advocated [ɛɪ] pronunciations of <er> words (cf. Chapters 27 and 28 for errant uncentralized examples in his RMS). I shall argue in Part IV that it is possible that Polly Stevenson advised Franklin to adopt the innovative centralized London [æɪ] pronunciation. If true, it may also suggest that, although Stevenson was a brilliant young woman, her speech may have betrayed her lower-middle-class origins.

1.1.23 HappY Vowels (cf. Chapter 16)

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /i/	HappY	Conservative [-ɪ ~ i ~ əɪ]	Innovative	Conservative [i ~ əɪ]	Innovative

One thing is clear, in his RMS, all these examples, with a few clear <-ly> [ləɪ ~ lɪɪ] exceptions, are rendered [i ~ i:].

Franklin supplies a considerable number of *HappY* words as well as -ly, -ity, -etry words which he has rhyme with words that he and his compatriots pronounced [ɪ ~ əɪ]. For such a small corpus, the number of examples is impressive: *family* [ˈfæmɪləɪ] ~ *high* [haɪ] ~ (1734), *finery* [ˈfɪnərəɪ] ~ *eye* [əɪ] (1750), *symmetry* [ˈsɪmɪtrɪəɪ] ~ *high* [haɪ] (1757), *posterity* [ˈpɒstɪərɪtɪəɪ] ~ *lie* [ləɪ] (1757), *deformity* [dɛˈfɔːmɪtɪəɪ] ~ *die* [dəɪ] (1757), *sincerity* [sɪnˈsɛrɪtɪəɪ] ~ *try* [trɪəɪ] (1757).

Franklin also matches *Price* words with final stressed -y / -ly [əɪ]: *deny* [dɪˈnəɪ] ~ *lie* [ləɪ] (1734), *rely* [rɪˈləɪ] ~ *die* [dəɪ] (1738), *comply* [kəmˈpləɪ] ~ *I* [əɪ] (1738), *supply* [səˈpləɪ] ~ *die* [dəɪ] (1742), *supply* [səˈpləɪ] ~ *eye* [əɪ] (1748), *awry* [aˈrɪəɪ] ~ *eye* [əɪ] (1750)... During the preceding century, the dominant pronunciation of

all of these words would have been in the vicinity of [ɛi] (cf. Hart, 1569).

Further support for this hypothesis comes from the work of 17th-century English poets such as Robert Herrick¹² (1591-1674), to name only one: *die* ~ *liberty* (“Corinna’s going a-Maying,” 1648), *thereby* ~ *confusedly* and *tie* ~ *civility* (“Delight in Disorder,” 1648), *whereby* ~ *privacy* (“His Grange or Private Wealth,” 1648) and, finally, *fly* ~ *nativity* (“His Return to London,” 1648).

Importantly, Franklin also rhymed *HappY* words (i.e. <-y>, <-ly>, <-ity>, etc.) with *Fleece* words such as *see*, *free*, *agree*, *me*, *we*, etc. If Franklin was indulging in code-switching when it suited the rhyme, all the following *HappY* words and *Fleece* words would have been realized with [i:]. If not, his rhymes may be interpreted as follows: *curiositie* [kʊɪ'ɒsɪtəi] ~ *me* [məi?] (1746), *simplicity* [sɪm'plɪsɪtəi] ~ *degree* [dɪ'gɪəi?] (1750), *jollity* [dʒɒlɪtəi] ~ *free* [friəi?] (1750), *eternity* [ɛ'tɛ.ɪnɪtəi] ~ *free* [friəi?] (1751), *eternity* [ɛ'tɛ.ɪnɪtəi] ~ *thee* [ðəi?] (1751). Wright (1905) recorded many such diphthongal pronunciation in England at the turn of the 20th century (cf. Chapter 16).

1.1.24 LettER Vowels (cf. Chapter 27?)

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /əɹ/	LettER	Conservative [əɹ]	Innovative [ə ~ ɹ]	Conservative [əɹ]	Innovative

In his RMS, Franklin systematically realizes <er> as [əɹ] (my IPA interpretation of his *yr* character is [əɹ]). The r-less pronunciation is pronounced by traditional eastern Massachusetts speakers today (“Easter” [iːstə ~ iːstɹ], “weather” [wɛðə ~ wɛðɹ]...) and probably by “vulgar” speakers in Franklin’s lifetime.

1.1.25 Wait Diphthongs

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /ai/	Wait	Conservative [æi ~ ɛi]	Innovative [ɛ:]	Conservative [ɛi]	Innovative [ɛ:]

12 Herrick was born in Cheapside, a commercial district in the London. He spent many years in rural Devon as a vicar.

Dobson (1968, 768, 779) shows that Gil (1619), Wallis (1653) and Wilkins (1668) still favoured the [æi] pronunciation for *Wait* words while Cooper (1687) claimed that both [ai] and [ɛi] were used. Based on these observations, I argued that this [æi] pronunciation must have been part of the Massachusetts feature pool. The more innovative [ɛi] pronunciation seems to have been dominant among most speakers during the 17th century. For some New Englanders, *Price* and *Wait* words shared the same diphthong with *wait* [wɛit] ~ *white* [(h)wɛit ~ (h)uɛit]. Orbeck (1927, 50), for example, gives the example of *hay wayes* ['hɛi,wɛiz] for “highways” which I believe may have had an older realization: ['hɛi,wæiz]. Others pronounced this as ['hæi,wɛi ~ hæi,wɛ:]...

Mazarin (2020, 1, 4) makes an important revelation showing that a monophthongal [ɛ:] realization already existed in vulgar London speech by the end of the 16th century and that it began to spread out from there. It is for this reason that he introduced the B Type phase of pronunciation which he dates from about 1550 to 1675, breaking with Barber (1997) who had proposed three major stages in development, each corresponding to the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.

The town records showed the spelling of <ai>, <ay> and <ei> which oscillated between [æi] and [ɛi] in words now spelt <ei> in modern orthography. The fact that Gil advocated this [æi] pronunciation demonstrates that some speakers in New England must still have considered it elegant.

Words spelt <ei> such as *deceit*, *receipt*, *receive* generally had two variant pronunciations during the 17th century and early 18th century, and perhaps three. Based on the <ay> and <ai> spellings recorded in the New England, Type B2 [æi], alongside [ɛi], as well as emerging [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] were common in 17th-century England as well as in Massachusetts: *obay* [ɔ'bei ~ obæi] for “obey” (Dedham, 1637). The same [ɛi ~ æi] variation may have existed for *recauiued* “received” (Dedham, 1656), *recauiued* (Dedham, 1663), *recaue* (Dedham, 1675), *reseaiued* (Dedham, 1678), *resaiueth* (Watertown, 1678) and *resaiued* (Groton, 1683)... (Orbeck, 1927, 34). Considering that most of the examples are from the town of Dedham (cf. Rev. Allin in Chapter 11), one wonders whether there may be a dialectal link with Norfolk, Suffolk or Essex here. Note also *concaiue* (Dedham, 1661), *resaights* “receipts” (Watertown, 1673), *resaits* (Watertown, 1677), *resaite* (Dedham, 1679), *desayt* “deceit” (Dedham, 1676), *kay* for “key” (Dedham, 1694) and so on. Orbeck takes all of these to reflect [ɛi], however, and this possibility cannot be discounted. As indicated earlier, he did not have access to Dobson’s assessment that Gil and Wallis preferred [æi] while Cooper accepted both [ɛi] and [ai], the latter being perhaps realized as [æi].

I feel confident that B2 [æi] and [ɛi] survived into the 18th century among older conservative Massachusetts speakers where these diphthongs were gradually replaced by innovative monophthongs [ɛ: ~ ɛ: ~ ɛ:].

Once these *Deceit* vowels had been reduced to monophthongs, they fell in line

with *Meat* words and followed the Great Vowel Shift [ɛ:] > [i:] via the bridge vowels [ɛ:] > [ɛ:] > [i:]. Recall that Bellot (1586) demonstrates that *Meat* words had already been raised to /i:/ in London as early as the late 16th century. We have already seen that innovative [i:] pronunciations in such words were considered vulgar by 18th century New Englanders. On the contrary, it was becoming the dominant pronunciation of *Meat* and *Deceit* in London and this explains why Franklin adopted the raised [i:] pronunciation for these words in his RMS. Based on his rhyme schemes, Franklin's own pronunciation for deceit words was [ɛ: ~ ɛ:].

1.1.26 Choice Diphthongs

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin's Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /ɔi/	Choice	Conservative [ui~ɹi~ɔi~ɒi] [Δi~əi]	Innovative [ai~æi~ei]	Conservative [ɹi ~ əi]	Innovative

In the last chapter, I pointed out that Lass (1999, 102-103) summarizes the data as follows: Hart (1569) realizes *joy* and *choice* as [ɔi] and *join* and *poison* as [ui]. Hodges (1644) has two realizations: [ɒi] (*boy, choice, joy, noise*) and [ei] (*boil, broil, coin, loin, point, toil*). Wallis has [ɒi] for *boys, toys, noise* and [əi] ([ɹi]?) or [ɔi] in *boil, oil, toil*.

I pointed out in Chapter 16 that *Choice* words and *Price* words were regularly rhymed by 18th-century American and English poets, including Franklin, and some supporting evidence may come from the pronunciation of *Choice* words (Chapters 23 and 27). Walker (1791, xv) writes that the London realization of this first element of this diphthong was [ɑ] as in French <âi>. “The diphthong oi or oy is composed of the French â and i; thus ‘toy’ and ‘boy’ would be exactly expressed to a Frenchman by writing them *tâi* and *bâi*.” He also transcribes “joy” as *djâi*. Literally, this would mean [ɑ:i ~ ai] but, as I have explained previously, to the English ear, French /ɑ(:)/ could have been reinterpreted and associated by some with proto-RP /ɒ(:)/. French <â> was sometimes transcribed as <aw>. Franklin's London-type [ɒi] (only appearing in the 1768 manuscript version of his RMS) seems to be very close if not identical to Walker's representation.

Furthermore, MacMahon (1998, 464) cites evidence for a London [ɔ:i] diphthong which is not too distant and some speakers had to be pronouncing *Price* words in the same way. Indeed, as we have seen above, [ɒi] is the dominant pronunciation given for Essex and the London area in the SED today, but also in contemporary Northamptonshire. How old is [ɒi] in these regions and could [ɒi]

reflect older realization of this diphthong as proposed by Ilahainen (1994, 205)?

I have demonstrated that Orbeck (1927, 58) records a variety of pronunciations for *Choice* words suggesting that one of the prominent variants of this diphthong was [ui ~ ʁi]: *booyes* for “boys” (Watertown, 1673), *appwint* for “appoint” (Watertown, 1674) (cf. from OF *appointer*, related to modern Fr [a.pwɛ̃]). These examples appear to reflect [ui] mentioned by Lass above, which is one of the earliest realizations of “boil” words (< Fr *bouillir* [bu.ʁir], OF [bu(i).ʁir]).

With regard to the <i> spellings, Orbeck leans in favour of [ɛi ~ əi] realizations: *apinted* “appointed” (Plymouth, 1701), *aging* for “adjoining” (Groton, 1683), *imply* “employ” (Groton, 1698), *implied* “employed” (Watertown, 1673), *implyment* “employment” (Plymouth, 1666) as well as *pint* (Plymouth, 1698). However, one example, *apaintment* for appointment (Groton, 1664) suggests a possible [æi ~ ei] realization. Shorrocks gives a list of examples in [ɛi] for Bolton, Lancashire, showing an advanced realization parallel to the 17th-century New England *Price* vowel, [ɛi].

In short, the overall picture appears quite unstable, which is not at all surprising considering that these spellings reflect the earliest stages of the settlement period when the koineization process was fully underway.

I demonstrated that Kenrick (1773, 24) considered <i> or <y> to be pronounced [ɛ:i ~ ɛ:ɪ], a surprising conservatism for the period, and/or [ai ~ æi?] (ibid., 41).¹³ For this reason, I concluded that, in his mind, the “faulty” realization of *oil* and *tile*, *boil* and *join* represents [ɛi] or [æi] and not necessarily [ʁi]. Lowell apparently pronounced these words as [ʁi] or [ai], probably the latter by the mid-19th century.

As mentioned above, Franklin systematically rhymes *Price* and *Choice* words, as do all his fellow New England poets as well as contemporary English poets (A. Pope, R. Herrick, etc.). Since I posited that Franklin favoured an [ʁi ~ əi] realization for his *Price* words, I concluded that he pronounced his *Choice* words in the same fashion.

However, in Chapter 27, we shall see that he spells “destroyed” as ***destracuyd*** in his RMS script which appears to betray his hesitation between his natural ***destruyid*** [dɛs'tɹɪd ~ dɛs'tɹəɪd] pronunciation and ***destrvoid*** [vɔɪ], a pronunciation that appears to have been spreading during the late 18th-century London (cf. MacMahon, 1998).

In Chapter 26, we shall see that Franklin, in his initial 1768 manuscript version of his vowel and consonant table, wavers between ***yi*** [əi ~ ʁi] and ***ai*** [vɔɪ] realizations of his *Price* diphthong. In Vaughan's 1779 edition, only ***yi*** is retained. We have just seen that these two realizations were also possible for

13 I thank Professor Joan Beal for having pointed out this second realization of the diphthong, which I had previously missed.

Choice words. So, what does this really mean? I ask the same questions here as were asked for *Price* words:

- a. In both cases, was Franklin hesitating between two London variants [Δi ~ əi] vs [ɔ:i ~ ɒi]?
- b. Did his own father, uncle and older siblings, from Northampton, England, already pronounce *Price* and *Choice* words as [ɒi], and as is the case today?
- c. Could [ɒi] have been Franklin's natural pronunciation for both these words as a child (as opposed to [ɛi])? Did he later adopt the Massachusetts [ɹi ~ əi] pronunciation thinking they were more sophisticated?

Again, based on the discussion of *Price* words above, it is improbable that [ɒi] was Franklin's native pronunciation. Dwight and Barlow offer numerous examples of these *Price-Choice* rhymes which they probably, including Franklin, pronounced [ɹi ~ əi] (or perhaps also [Δi] in the case of Barlow who was from Connecticut). In conclusion, [ɒɒi] appears to be the model he considered adopting for his RMS *Choice* words, not his own Boston [ɹi ~ əi]. This is substantiated by his *destroy ~ vanity* rhyme (cf. *Happy* words below).

1.1.27 Know Diphthongs

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England "feature pool"		Franklin's Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /ou/	Know	Conservative [ɔ:] [ɔ:]	Innovative [ɹu ~ əu]	Conservative	Innovative [ɹu ~ əu]

We saw that *Know* would have been pronounced [ɔ:] by the mid-17th century (Görlach, 2006) while Dobson (1968, 807-808) contends that Wallis (1653), Wharton (1654) and Newton (1661) pronounced it as a diphthong with an "intermediate" onset vowel, [Δu]. Others such as Gil (1619) and Sherwood (1632) used the monophthongal variant alongside it, while Wharton (1654) and Hodges (1649), for example, give only monophthongs approximating [ɔ:].

For reasons explained previously, given the chronological sequence, it is perhaps more credible that, by the 17th century, Dobson's [Δ] onset was in fact [ɹ] and that the diphthong, at least in some of the eastern and Midland varieties was closer [ɹu ~ ɹu]. In all probability, there were also monophthongal variants such as [ɔ:] and [ɔ:], with the latter still common today.

Know is not counted among Wells' lexical sets either, but in view of Franklin's rhymes of *now ~ know*, *now ~ low*, *now ~ bestow*, and my conclusion that

Franklin's Boston pronunciation of *Mouth* words would have been close to [ɹu ~ əu], I concluded that his *Know* words were already rendered as [ɔ(u)? ~ ɹu ~ əu] diphthongs. [ɹu ~ əu] seems confirmed by his *bestows ~ house* rhyme (1757). In other words, it is not impossible that the shift to monophthongization only affected certain dialects. In that case, these diphthongal pronunciations are likely to have been a harbinger of our modern GA /oʊ/ and RP /əʊ/.

However, the problem here is that Franklin's RMS transcription of the *Mouth* vowel is *auu* [ɔu ~ ɔo], which is in keeping with the London pronunciation of the late 18th century, transcribed as [ɔ:u] by MacMahon (1998, 464). The conservative New England equivalent would have been [ɹu ~ əu] (see Chapter 23). Franklin's *now ~ know*, rhymes would have had a shared realization, [əu ~ ɹu ~ ɹʊ], which would have permitted this rhyme.

1.1.28 Known Diphthongs

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England "feature pool"		Franklin's Boston pronunciation	
		Phonetic range			
ME /ou/	Known	Conservative [ɔ ~ ɹ]	Innovative [ɹu ~ əu]	Conservative [ɔ(:)] [ɔ ~ ɹ]	Innovative [ɹu ~ əu] [ɔ ~ ɹ]

On the other hand, Franklin's Boston pronunciation of *Known* probably resembled a short [ɹ ~ ɹ̥] and this would appear to have been common throughout New England as we can see by the numerous rhymes of *known*, *grown*, etc. and allowed rhymes of *known* with *done*, *one*, *son*, etc.. Broadly speaking, it is not impossible that the phonetic range encompassed [ʊ ~ ɹ ~ ɹ̥ ~ ɔ]; see 17th-century Massachusetts spellings of "south," "drowned" and "about" as *sothe*, *drond* and *abut* (Orbeck, 1927), possibly monolingual [ɔ ~ ɹ̥] and [ʊ ~ ɹ] for *abut*.

We are faced with the possibility of different pronunciations of <ow> words, one in open syllables, e.g. [nəu ~ nɹu] for "now," and one in closed syllables, [nun ~ nɹn ~ nɹ̥n ~ nɔn] for "known."

1.2 Some Final Conclusions Regarding New England Short u and Short o

We have studied the numerous rhymes by the New England Poets between what appear to be historically distinct word classes affecting *Goose*, *Goat*, *Strut*, *Foot* and *Lot*. This permitted an extraordinary range of rhymes between subclasses of these words, rhymes which certainly would be impossible today (hence their

initial classification as “imperfect” rhymes).

We observed that, just as in large areas of the Midlands and North of England, the *Strut-Foot* split had not yet occurred in 18th-century Massachusetts and that both were pronounced in the vicinity of [ʊ ~ ʏ]. Therefore, during Franklin’s lifetime, the mass of *Strut* words were still globally at the [ʏ]-stage and, if we follow Grandgent (1899), its lowering and centralization to [ʌ] must have been rare in Massachusetts. Franklin’s mother’s grandparents were Norfolk people, his father and older half brothers and sisters were from Northamptonshire, regions where the *Strut-Foot* “non-split” was prevalent. This certainly explains why, in Massachusetts, *blood, flood, foot, wood, cut, cup*, but also *come, done, love, shop, lot, rod*, etc. were all pronounced [ʏ] and possibly [ʏ̥] and, depending on the variety and/or register, close variants thereof. We have now come full circle.

Goose words were not universally shortened, of course, but many of them were. Grandgent (1899) gave examples of this shortening in *roof, hoof, soon* but, from the rhymes of the New Englanders, I concluded that words like *doom, gloom, tomb, womb, comb, room, moon*, etc. were also short. To this we can add *prove, move, approve*, but also *love, above, dove* (the bird), etc. These stem from ME /ɔ:/ and had been raised to /u:/ by the 16th century. They remained long in many words but, in many other varieties, /u:/ was shortened and lowered to [ɔ] > [ʏ] (> [ʏ̥]). The final stage in various southern English dialects, as well as both RP and GA, was [ʌ].

In Chapter 20, I discussed “u obscurum” (coined by John Wallis). I described the Appalachian pronunciation of words like *love, tough, rough*, etc. to be in the vicinity of a longish nasal [ũ:] rather than /ʌ/ as this sound is usually described. This conclusion is inspired from my own transcriptions of Virginia and West Virginia English, as well as Hall’s description for the Smokies that the GA /ʌ/ is often raised to a sound he has difficulty identifying and which he matches with [ʊ] (Hall, 1942). If this is accurate, it could be a conservative reflex of raised long and short ME o /ɔ:/ ~ /ɔ/ as described by Dobson (1968). This could mean that two models of development could be imagined in 17th-century England and in parts of North America during the period of koineization. The first follows the traditional path proposed by Lass (1999) while the second runs exactly parallel to it, but along a slightly central route:

/u:/ > [u] > [ɔ] > [ɔ̥] > [ɔ] + centralization to [ʌ] (note that the shift to [ɔ] > [ʌ] requires a centralization)

/u:/ > [w(:)]? > [ʊ] > [ʏ] > [ʏ̥] > [ʌ] (the course here is direct)

Linguists in America (Willard, 1840; Webster, 1783, 1789; Grandgent, 1899; Krapp, 1925; Avis, 1971), but also in England (Barnes, 1844; Ellis, 1869; Burton, 2010; Gachelin, 1981; Wells, 1988; Trudgill, 2016), have described this same shortening of many *Goat* words. Avis, Burton (following Barnes) and Ellis also

gave diphthongal variants for these short o realizations, which the last two describe as [ʌ]. According to Ellis (cited in Burton, 2010) the number of shortened *Goat* words stood at around 200 words. Grandgent states that these examples of short o were numerous in “rustic” New England English as well. By the end of the 19th century, they were increasingly recessive in educated speech. This feature can still be heard to this day in places like Norfolk and New England in a fairly broad range of words foremost among which are *home, dome, whole, road, toad, load, coat, boat, stone, bone, rove*, etc. which, if we follow Grandgent, Franklin would have pronounced [ɤ]. We also saw that this same realization extended to *grove, drove*, etc. Diphthongized [ɤə] variants certainly co-existed and proof of this is found in the New England town registers (e.g. *rooad* for “road”).

Furthermore, Franklin, Barlow and Dwight rhyme many of these *Goat* words (*both, coast, boast*) with *Lot* words (*sloth, cost, frost*, etc.) which they also presumably pronounced [ɤ ~ ɤ]. Despite this, in his RMS, Franklin presents *Lot* words as being pronounced [ɒ]. Although Grandgent (1899) describes this vowel in a way I have interpreted to be [ɒ(:) ~ ɑ(:)], [ɒ(:)] was also the common pronunciation in London at the end of the 18th century and this may explain the dichotomy. Orbeck’s examples of <oo> or <oa> spellings for many *Lot* and *Goat* words seen in Chapter 22, such as “rod,” “lot” and “road,” “abode,” “trode,” for instance, support the existence of these raised, shortened [ɤ ~ ɤ] realizations in the 17th-century Massachusetts Bay colony.

1.3 Franklin’s Boston Vowel Inventory

Based on the evidence gathered in Part III, a broad, non-exhaustive overview of the 17th-century Massachusetts vowel inventory is presented in Figure 24.1. It includes simplified “phonetic ranges” for each lexical set.

Fig. 24.1 The New England phonetic ranges: vowels.

Key word	New England (17 th c.)	Franklin (18 th c.)	GA /RP
Price	[ɹi ~ əi ~ ai ~ æi ~ ɛi]	[ɹi ~ əi] *[ɒi] (London, Northamptonshire)	/aɪ/
Fleece	[i: ~ ɛ: ~ ɛ:]; [ɛi]?	[i: ~ ɛ: ~ ɛ]; [ɛi]?	/i:/
Meat	[ɛ: ~ ɛ: ~ ɛ: ~ i:]	ɛ: ~ ɛ: (~ ɛ:); rarely [i:]	/i:/
Face	[ɛ: ~ ɛ:]	[ɛ: ~ ɛ:]	/eɪ/
Mouth	[ɔu ~ ɹu ~ əu] [au ~ æu ~ ɛu]	[ɹu ~ əu]	/aʊ/
Goose	[u: ~ ʊ ~ ɤ]	[u: ~ ʊ ~ ɤ]	/u:/

Key word	New England (17 th c.)	Franklin (18 th c.)	GA /RP
Goat	[ɔ: ~ ɔ(:) ~ ʔ]	[ɔ: ~ ɔ(:) ~ ʔ]	/oʊ ~ əʊ/
Kit	[ɪ ~ i ~ i: (~ i:ɪ?)] + lowering to [ɛ]	[ɪ ~ i ~ i:] + lowering [ɛ]	/ɪ/
Dress	[ɛ ~ ɛ̃ ~ ɛ̃ ~ ɪ]	[ɛ̃ ~ ɛ̃] > [ɪ] (frequent)	/ɛ/
Trap	[æ ~ ɛ]	[æ]	/æ/
Bath	[æ(:) ~ ɛ:]	[æ(:) ~ ɛ:]	/æ(:) ~ ɑ:/
Palm	[æ: ~ ɑ:]	[æ(:)]	/ɑ:/
Taught	[ɑ: ~ ɒ:] & [aɔ]	[ɑ: ~ ɒ:]	/ɑ: ~ ɒ:/ /ɔ:/
Strut	[ʊ ~ ʏ]	[ʏ]	/ʌ/
Foot	[ʊ ~ ʏ]	[ʏ]	/ʊ/
Lot	Type a) [ɒ(:) ~ ɑ(:)] RMS Type b) [ʏ ~ ʏ]	Type a) [ɒ(:) ~ ɑ(:)] RMS Type b) [ʏ ~ ʏ]	/ɑ: ~ ɒ/
Near	[æ:ɪ ~ ɛ:ɪ ~ i:ɪ]	[æ:ɪ ~ ɛ:ɪ ~ i:ɪ]	/ɪ ~ ɪə/
Square	[æ:ɪ ~ ɛ:ɪ]/ [i:ɪ ~ əɪ]	[æ:ɪ ~ ɛ:ɪ]	/ɛɪ ~ ɛɪ/
Start	[æɪ ~ ɛɪ]	[æ(:)ɪ]	/ɑ:ɪ ~ ɑ:/
North	[ɒɪ]	[ɒɪ]	/ɔɪ ~ ɔ:/
Nurse	[ɒɪ ~ əɪ], + [ɛɪ]	[ɒɪ]	/əɪ ~ ɜ:/
Girl	[ɛɪ ~ æɪ] [ɒɪ ~ əɪ]	[ɒɪ]	/əɪ ~ ɜ:/
HappY	[i ~ əi] (cf. [ɛi] Hart, 1569)	[i? ~ əi]	/i/
LetTER	[əɪ]	[əɪ]	/əɪ ~ ə/
Wait	[æi ~ ɛi ~ ɛ:]	[ɛ:]	/ɛi/
Choice	[ui ~ ʔi ~ əi] ([ɛi]?)	[ʔi ~ əi]	/ɔi/
Know	[ɔ(:) ~ ʏ ~ əʊ]	[ʏ ~ əʊ]	/oʊ ~ əʊ/
Known	[ʊ ~ ʏ ~ ɔ ~ ʔ]	[ʏ]	/oʊ ~ əʊ/

*We have seen that, in Franklin's vowel and consonant table that he posted to Polly Stevenson in 1768, he gives two pronunciations for *Price* words: [ʔi] and [ɒi]. Given that the latter realization does not appear to have been common in either Boston or Philadelphia (but probably was in Northamptonshire as it is today), I argue that this was probably a feature of London English. We shall see support for this in Chapter 27. Surprisingly, this [ɒi] realization does not appear in the 1779 RMS edition. Why it was removed (at the request of Vaughan? Or Franklin?) remains a mystery. In Chapter 25, I propose that Polly Stevenson, a native of Kensington and his advisor in matters of English pronunciation, may have considered [ɒi] vulgar. Yet, the diphthong he proposes

in his RMS for *Mouth* words is [ʊ ~ ɒ], and not [ɹʊ ~ əʊ]! For reasons of phonetic symmetry, one would have expected the latter.

2. Franklin’s Consonant Inventory

Figure 24.2 shows the general traits of Franklin’s consonant inventory. The New England consonant inventory recorded here appears to be identical to the evidence collected regarding Franklin’s idiolect. His long stay in Philadelphia may have reinforced the preservation of his postvocalic /r/ [ɹ] pronunciation, which was already being elided in New England as early as the 17th century, another sign of southeastern English influence. This is much earlier than is normally conceded (cf. Grandgent, 1899). The preservation of [æ] after <w> or before <r> or <lm>, rather than lowering, may be another example of Philadelphia influence. Recall that all but a few of the poems used for the analysis of his rhymes were composed *before* 1757, the year of his departure for London as a colonial agent. This should serve as strong evidence that the rhyme scheme reflect American colonial realizations.

For a more detailed discussion of Franklin’s RMS consonantal system, see Chapter 27.

Fig. 24.2 Franklin’s consonant inventory.

RP	GA	18th-century New England	Franklin’s Phonemes
Occlusives			
/p/	/p/	/p/	/p/
/b/	/b/	/b/	/b/
/t/	/t/	/t/	/t/
/d/	/d/	/d/	/d/
/k/	/k/	/k/	/k/
/g/	/g/	/g/	/g/
Fricatives			
/f/	/f/	/f/	/f/
/v/	/v/	/v/	/v/
/s/	/s/	/s/	/s/
/z/	/z/	/z/	/z/
/ʃ/	/ʃ/	/ʃ/	/ʃ/
/ʒ/	/ʒ/	/ʒ/	/ʒ/
/θ/	/θ/	/θ/	/θ/

RP	GA	18th-century New England	Franklin's Phonemes
/ð/	/ð/	/ð/	/ð/
/h/	/h/	/h/	/h/
Affricates			
/tʃ/	/tʃ/	/tʃ/	/tʃ/
/dʒ/	/dʒ/	/dʒ/	/dʒ/
Nasals			
/m/	/m/	/m/	/m/
/n/	/n/	/n/	/n/
/ŋ/	/ŋ/	/ŋ/	/ŋ/
Liquids and approximants			
/l/	/l/	/l/	/l/ [l ~ ɫ]
/r/	/r/	/r/	/r/ [ɹ ~ ɻ]

In Chapter 23, we discussed [e], [i] vowels and [j] glides following most of the consonants in this inventory, a phenomenon that was considered elegant in London and which Franklin and Webster abhorred. Pronunciations of “cow” as *keow*, “gate” as *geate*, etc. were common in all of the colonies, not only New England. Wright (1905) showed it was common in England as well as late as the 20th century, as did Hall (1942) for the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee.

Also note that, based on the discussion in Chapter 23 (and Chapter 27), I have chosen to exclude /w/, /ʌ/ (i.e. [hw-ɪ]) and /j/ from Franklin’s phoneme inventory. Although they certainly existed in the New England feature pool, the glides [w] and [j] were considered substandard by him and he insisted on using their vocalic counterparts instead. In his RMS, Franklin records only /u-/ , /hu-/ and /i-/ (cf. Chapters 23, 25, 27). Webster (1789) and Walker (1791, xv) also prefer the vocalic realizations of these. The details and the precise nature of Franklin’s consonantal system will be discussed more fully in Chapters 27 and 28.

Conclusion to Part III

The data assembled in Part III has enabled us to gather a large corpus of crucial information about the phonology of New England English. This, in turn, has allowed us to:

- a. reconstruct the feature pools of the colonial koines and, in particular, the New England/Massachusetts koine;
- b. determine the phonetic range for each of Wells’ key words and of a few I have introduced myself;

- c. in general terms, identify the innovative and conservative features that appear in the phonetic ranges;
- d. draw a complete portrait of Franklin's personal Boston/Philadelphia-influenced phoneme inventory; and
- e. based on this, compare and contrast his native pronunciation with that of his proto-phonemic RMS model (Part IV).

As announced in the introduction to Chapter 23, the objective was to offer a broad summary of the major observations and conclusions made in Chapters 16 through 24. As mentioned initially (Chapter 15), the evidence presented here was based on the descriptions and accounts of 16th- and 17th-century orthoepists. This evidence was compared and contrasted with spelling pronunciations recorded by the 17th-century New England and New York town records. The rhyme schemes employed in Franklin's poems (1719, 1733-1758) and those of the New England poets, Joel Barlow and Timothy Dwight, provide a remarkably unified phonetic picture. Ancillary evidence from 19th- and 20th-century English and American dialects offered precious confirmation for many of the hypotheses that were advanced regarding the pronunciations discussed in the aforementioned sources. What was perhaps most remarkable is that features that were supposed to have disappeared centuries ago were and are, in fact, alive and well in scattered varieties of English in Britain and North America. To repeat once again, this offers valuable proof to Ihalainen's contention that the dialects are often more conservative than most linguists would ever have imagined (Ihalainen, 1994). I hasten to add that this does not mean that these same contemporary varieties (i.e. 20th-century varieties) have not introduced numerous innovations! Language, like society itself, is an ever-changing entity and, as I have stressed before, once the English language was firmly implanted in North America it took on a life of its own (cf. TELSUR, Labov et al., and the ongoing vowel shifts in contemporary America).

As I have repeated on several occasions, the most problematical findings here concern the illusive nature of the back vowels, which I have called "New England short u and o." What is particularly striking is the conservative character of these rhymes, which generally correspond to Mazarin's B2 and, especially, to the C1 phases (corresponding roughly to 1650 to 1700). This is not too far off the mark given that Franklin was born in 1706. Moreover, there can be little doubt that he was influenced linguistically in many respects by his older Northamptonshire family members and neighbours from Suffolk as well as his mother's family's Norfolk input.

When the sources are viewed collectively, the picture that emerges is highly complex and variable, but ultimately coherent, showing the incontrovertible interrelatedness of the southern English and early American pronunciation systems. The reasons for this were explained in Part II, particularly in Chapters

10, 11 and 12, which outline the nature of the early American koines and the multiple influences of the founder generations in each colony, each with its unique cultural and linguistic features.

The combined early English and American linguistic evidence highlights the evolving nature of the New England phonological system during the crucial settlement (founder generation) period which stretched from the early 1600s to the first quarter of the 18th century. I argue that the principal North American regional koines were generally established and identifiable geographically and culturally by the time of Franklin's birth in 1706.

Each key word discussed above provides, very broadly speaking, the phonetic range of elements that encompass attested variant realizations of each lexical set in New England. As we have seen, many of these pronunciations were shared throughout the colonies. Wherever possible, in Chapter 23 I included a breakdown of both the innovative and conservative forms. This, in turn, helped identify the paritary versus disparitary registers outlined in Chapters 11 and 12 of Part II. Expressed differently, the innovative features tend to be characteristic of the paritary register (i.e. more "vulgar" speech) whereas the conservative traits tend to be associated with disparitary registers of the formal language used in public in an official capacity, at least in the colonies. Paradoxically, the London elites were far more likely to assimilate many formerly stigmatized innovative features...

In a few cases, we observed the emergence of differing sociolinguistic judgements by 18th- and early 19th-century English and American English speakers, for instance, the American reluctance to reject the centralization of [ɛɪ] ("mercy," "merchant," etc.) and their preference of the [ɛɪ] or [æɪ] pronunciations over centralized [əɪ] in words such as "bird," "girl," "third," etc. On the contrary, in London, [æɪ] was rejected as "vulgar" and centralized pronunciations appear to have been increasingly common and acceptable. We see that Franklin systematically proposes the innovative [əɪ] pronunciation in his RMS another sign of innovative London English. We have also seen that Franklin and Webster considered the glide following a consonant to be vulgar, whereas it was considered elegant in England by Walker (1791).

Although the phonetic ranges identified for each key word above often reflect the same basic variants as those recorded back in England (cf. ME /ɪ/ > /ɛ/, ME /ɛ/ > /ɪ/, etc.), when viewed inter-dialectally from a sociolinguistic perspective, I conclude that it is the prescriptive pressures promoted by the teaching establishments in both nations during the 19th century that increasingly shaped the nature of the disparitary registers of each country, but not necessarily in the same direction. In other words, only certain key elements of the phonetic ranges discussed here were retained in each country as acceptable realizations for the key words of Wells' lexical sets. Those that were not judged to be worthy of expression in the

public sphere were relegated to appropriate institutions where paritary, non-standard idioms were permitted or even favoured for reasons of covert prestige (in taverns, military circles, agricultural activities, etc.).

More specifically, the evidence yielded in Part III serves not only to identify specific phonological characteristics of Massachusetts English, and the colonial koines more generally but, more precisely and importantly, how Franklin's Boston idiolect fits into this scheme. Despite obvious gaps and uncertainties surrounding the data and analyses presented here, the global vision obtained from his phonemic/phonetic inventory is sufficiently detailed to identify whether the pronunciations he describes for each vowel and consonant of his RMS are representative of New England or London English.

Once again, contrary to what one might expect, it is the lower-status innovations that seem to have permeated the speech of middle-class Londoners during the last quarter of the 18th century. The reasons for this could be due to the rapid social and economic ascension of a new middle class of merchants and artisans, i.e. a new moneyed *bourgeoisie* (cf. Beal, 1999, 23). I discuss a similar development in Parisian French after the French Revolution (Chapter 12). It would seem that it is for this reason that a number of formerly stigmatized features of their speech were surreptitiously adopted by a new rising class of "polite" speakers.

In Chapters 29 and 30, we shall examine not only Franklin's legacy as a linguist but also the unexpected ideological reasons for Webster's resistance to these linguistic innovations, which lie at the heart of his declaration of American linguistic independence (1789).

The evidence that has been gathered and analyzed in Part III sets the stage for an in-depth comparative study of Franklin's proto-phonemic *Reformed Mode of Spelling*, which is the topic of Part IV and the primary aim of this book.

PART IV.

FRANKLIN'S *REFORMED MODE OF
SPELLING* (1768/1779)

“ENGLISH” OR “AMERICAN”?

Introduction to Part IV

As announced in the General Introduction (cf. Volume I), Part IV is the culmination of a long study, the objective of which was to compare the data accrued in Part III regarding the nature of New England pronunciation and, in particular, of Franklin's native Boston, Philadelphia influenced pronunciation. Part IV assembles and discusses all the elements needed to definitively establish:

- a. whether the accent represented by Franklin's proto-phonemic alphabet is based on his colonial American accent or
- b. whether it is based on what he viewed to be refined London speech.

The second option has been my working hypothesis for the reasons outlined throughout this book, starting in the General Introduction.

Thanks to the lessons learned about Franklin's idiolect in Part III, a secondary, but very significant, objective is to identify what appear to be more conservative New England features that surface now and then in his transcriptions and which contradict the underlying patterns of his scheme. Part IV is organized as follows.

Chapter 25 introduces the fundamental elements needed to understand the background, nature and a page-by-page outline of the contents of the RMS.

Chapter 26 includes a detailed study of the original manuscript versions of the data preserved in the archives of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia and Vaughan's 1779 edition of Franklin's RMS which appears in Chapter 5 of a collection of Franklin's writings.

The American Philosophical Society was founded by Franklin in 1743 and these documents were donated by Polly Stevenson's family to the Society. Her papers, preserved in the Islandora collection, include the original manuscript of his vowel and consonant table with Franklin's descriptions of all the characters that he sent to Polly Stevenson, along with his first July 20th letter (formerly missing and never studied from a linguistic perspective previously). In it, he requests Polly's assistance with this RMS endeavour. This is also accompanied by what I believe to be a draft of Polly Stevenson's reply to his requests for help and her caustic opinion about his proposed spelling reform.

All this data has been gathered, compared and contrasted. The information gleaned from these two sources is systematically analyzed, character by

character, proto-phoneme by proto-phoneme, and compared with New England and English sources studied in Part III.

This prepares the groundwork for Chapter 27, which continues this technical analysis, this time covering the diphthongs, consonants and miscellaneous characteristics (including palatalization and prosodic features such as word and sentence stress).

The objective of Chapter 28 is thus to identify the characteristics of Franklin's RMS which, on the one hand, are intended to reflect London English and, on the other, which preserve unintended traces of his own Boston (or Philadelphia-influenced) idiolect. This chapter terminates with a global assessment of the scientific merits of Franklin's RMS. I conclude that it contains numerous innovations regarding phonetics and phonemics that were far ahead of his time, contributions that have never been fully recognized on account of the sketchy and incomplete manner in which the entire RMS was presented. Unfortunately, as we shall see, this masked the value of its contents.

25. The *Reformed Mode of Spelling*: Presentation and Analysis

Introduction

The objective of Chapter 25 is to provide a contextualization for Franklin's *Reformed Mode of Spelling*. It is composed of three main sections, the first of which provides background information about Franklin's editor, friend and fellow Whig, Benjamin Vaughan (1751-1835), as well as his motivations for compiling and publishing Franklin's writings under the title of *Political, Miscellaneous and Philosophical Pieces Written by Benjamin Franklin*. It is the last chapter of this volume that is devoted to Franklin's *Reformed Mode of Spelling*. When one considers his many other accomplishments, comparatively speaking, his RMS is a relatively minor contribution but, having said this, both Franklin and Vaughan obviously believed this orthographic model to be of sufficient importance to include in the book.

The second section of this chapter reviews all the previous linguistic studies of the *Reformed Mode of Spelling* of which I am aware from the 18th century to the middle of the 20th century. In this part, I outline the contributions previous scholars have made to our knowledge of Franklin's alphabet and what it has taught us about not only the phonological system he had imagined but also how it reflects 18th-century London English and New England English.

Section three provides a page-by-page summary of the contents of Franklin's reform. This is designed to offer the reader further insight into the way Franklin organized his scheme as well as to explain the scientific foundations of his proto-phonemic alphabet.

This section also includes a discussion concerning the hitherto missing letter that Franklin wrote to Polly Stevenson on July 20, 1768 that was first mentioned in the General Introduction. Franklin's July 20th letter was the first of two letters he wrote to her. It is entirely written in his reformed orthography and provides us with crucial linguistic and sociolinguistic details which were unknown to any of the scholars who previously have worked on Franklin's RMS.

At a linguistic level, this July 20th letter is of vital importance because it

represents Franklin's first attempt to actually apply his new alphabet. As such, it contains numerous beginner's errors of phonetic transcription, some of which are certainly due to a lack of concentration. These slip-ups mainly concern his occasional deviation from his RMS model and relapses into his own idiom which reveal highly interesting details about Franklin's natural Massachusetts accent that were identified in Part III (cf. Chapter 28).

Section three also outlines and interprets the contents and pertinence of Stevenson and Franklin's September 26th and September 28th letters. Contrary to the July 20th letter, however, all the linguists who have studied his RMS had access to the September 26th and 28th letters that have been printed in various editions.

Stevenson's September 26th letter, although it is quite short, demonstrates Polly Stevenson's forthrightness, and her blunt criticisms of Franklin's new alphabet. Her comments must have given him some food for thought. I conclude this chapter with a review of Franklin's lengthy refutations of her critiques (September 28th).

Since Vaughan's edition of his RMS is only fourteen pages long, the entire document has been reproduced in Appendix 1. In Appendix 2, I present IPA transcriptions of Franklin's July 20th manuscript letter, and Stevenson's September 26th manuscript response to Franklin. This is followed by Franklin's September 28th letter to Stevenson (published in the 1779 edition). The librarians of the American Philosophical Society have told me that the original manuscript version has been lost. In addition, I have included the transcriptions of the two stanzas of Joseph Addison's "The Campaign." Appendix 3 consists of a complete glossary of all the words transcribed by Franklin and Stevenson, a total of 442 words. I have reproduced Franklin's original, accompanied by IPA transcriptions.

1. Benjamin Vaughan's 1779 Edition of Franklin's Writings

With the exception of a two-year-long stay in America between 1762-1764, Franklin spent the years from 1757 to the beginning of 1775 in London as a colonial agent, where he defended the rights of the Pennsylvania House and Assembly and, as the years passed, the interests of other American colonies including Massachusetts (cf. Chapters 6-9, Part I). Despite some initial success in forcing the Proprietors of Pennsylvania to pay their fair share of the war debt (i.e. the French and Indian Wars), his political position and efforts were viewed with considerable acrimony by the Tories in the House of Lords who considered him to be a rabble rouser and a potential traitor (cf. Chapters 7-9 of Part I). We have seen, however, that his demands for greater democratic representation for the colonies in Parliament were based on his passionate belief that the

future greatness of the British Empire lay in the economic development and colonization of North America.

In London, the refusal by the colonial legislatures to accept Parliament's unilateral decision to levy taxes on them was perceived by the authorities in London to be a direct challenge to the king's authority. The Tories believed that the colonists were rising too far above their station and were thus posing a serious threat to the established natural hierarchical social order. Given their mindset, and the context of the time, they were right. Recall Alexander Pope's poem "An Essay on Man," 1733, which begins with a reference to the "Great Chain of Being," which from God began... and in which he calls for social stability and acceptance of this God-given social order (i.e. the status quo) (cf. Chapter 1). In short, considering the Americans' low social origins and dissident religious views, there was no particular reason that justified their having a voice in Parliament or in any other branch of government.

It was during a particularly demoralizing period in the summer of 1768 that Franklin turned his attention to formulating his proto-phonemic alphabet, perhaps as a means to shift his attention away from the increasingly demoralizing negotiations with the royal authorities.

Considering that the notes and tables Franklin sent to Polly Stevenson in 1768 were essentially the same as those he provided to Vaughan in 1779, it is quite obvious that he did little or no work on the RMS during the eleven-year interval. If we can believe Franklin's claim in his second letter to Noah Webster (Franklin July 9, 1786) in which he states that he had thought his scheme through "pretty fully," the treatise that was published in 1779 was, in fact, an incomplete and experimental first draft. As it stands, there are obvious gaps in the RMS, in particular regarding Franklin's presentation of the diphthongs, which he never had time to finish. Luckily, Franklin and Stevenson's transcriptions reveal his intentions.

On this point, Alexander Ellis (1869, 1058) states that "Dr. Franklin's scheme of phonetic writing, though hasty and unrevised, is too interesting to be omitted" (cf. below).

As I have explained in Part I, there can be no doubt that Franklin, since the time he was a printer's apprentice, had been thinking about the deficiencies of Modern English orthography and there can be no doubt whatsoever that he had thought long and hard about ways to modernize it in order to render the system more efficient.

It is not impossible, however, that the RMS reflects what may have originally been a more complete collection of notes. Indeed Vaughan (Franklin, 1779, 467) recalls seeing Sir Thomas Smith's name in Franklin's notes but goes no further (cf. below) and additional details about Smith and other orthoepists may have been among the many documents Franklin writes were lost or destroyed during

the Revolution. When the *Political, Miscellaneous and Philosophical Pieces written by Benjamin Franklin* was published in 1779, Franklin was in Paris, negotiating the terms of an alliance with the French. If this had not been the case, he might have found the time to review and augment Vaughan's notes and papers to improve his scheme. Sadly, with a war between Great Britain and America looming on the horizon, the RMS was far from being a priority.

1.1 Benjamin Vaughan: Friend and Fellow Whig

The first thing that strikes the modern reader is why any Englishman would have sought to publish the works of Benjamin Franklin at a time when the war against the Americans was still raging and after thousands of British soldiers had lost their lives on the battlefields of America. To make matters worse, the year preceding this publication, Franklin was nominated as the American Plenipotentiary to France and it is in this capacity that he and two associates negotiated a military and trade alliance with the government of King Louis XVI, England's archenemy. These are the very negotiations which led to the official recognition of the independence of the United States of America by France on February 6, 1778 followed by France's entry into the war against Great Britain as an ally of the United States. Simply put, despite his multiple, yearly oaths of allegiance to the King of England as a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly, Franklin had broken these sacred pledges and was clearly now a traitor to the British crown. How could Benjamin Vaughan, or any British subject, have described Franklin in such glowing terms and printed his works at such a critical time? In the conclusion to Vaughan's preface to Franklin's work, he provides better contextualization which helps us better understand the mindset and motivations of British Whigs:

Can *Englishmen* read these things, and not sigh at recollecting that the *country* which could produce their author, was once without controversy *their own!* — Yet he who praises Dr. Franklin for mere *ability*, praises him for that quality of his mind, which stands lowest in his own esteem. Reader, whoever you are, and how much soever you think you hate him, know that this great man loves *you* enough to wish *to do you good* (my italics) (cf. Chapters 2, 4, 5): His country's friend, but *more* of human kind. (Vaughan, 1779, vi)

Here we return to a topic discussed in Chapters 6 and 9, namely, the fact that Franklin was viewed as an "Englishman" by other Britons. Sociolinguistically, this is of significance. Vaughan's words appear to be inspired from the speech delivered by William Pitt the Elder's defence of Franklin before the House of Lords (cf. Chapter 8 and below). William Pitt, former Prime Minister of Great Britain, staunch defender of American rights, was yet another of Franklin's Whig supporters. Very early on, Pitt had understood the long-term strategic and

economic benefits of maintaining North America within the British Empire. Indeed, Great Britain's final victory over France during the French and Indian Wars owes more to his efforts than to the actions of any other political figure. It is also significant that Vaughan, like Franklin and Pitt, considered Americans and the English to be "fellow-subjects" of the same nation; i.e. "Can Englishmen read these things, and not sigh at recollecting that the country which could produce their author, was once without controversy (of) their own!" Until that point, Franklin firmly believed England was his motherland and America was intimately bound to it.

In Chapter 8, we discussed how Pitt supported the Franklin and his defence of American's rights and, in a rousing speech in the House of Lords on January 20, 1775 he called for the Crown to respect the principles outlined in the English Bill of Rights of 1689 and the English Constitution on which all of the American revindications were founded. The association between the principles of Whiggism and the American cause are omnipresent.

This resistance to your arbitrary system of taxation might have been foreseen: it was obvious, from the nature of things and of mankind; and, above all, from the Whiggish spirit flourishing in that country. The spirit which now resists your taxation in America, is the same which formerly opposed loans, benevolences, and ship-money, in England: the same spirit which called all England *on its legs*, and by the Bill of Rights vindicated the English constitution: the same spirit which established the great, fundamental, essential maxim of your liberties, *that no subject of England shall be taxed but by his own consent*. This glorious spirit of Whiggism animates three millions in America; who prefer poverty with liberty to gilded chains and sordid affluence; and who will die in defence of their rights as men, as freemen. (quoted in Ryerson, 2018, 363-364)

Recall also that both General William Howe and his brother Admiral Howe had met secretly with Franklin at this time to find a way to avert the coming war between the Americans and British. All to no avail. Tragically, both of these military men were constrained by events beyond their control to lead British forces in a brutal war which they both had sought to avoid. A few months later, Lord William Howe would lead British forces in a bloody assault on Bunker Hill, near Boston (cf. Chapter 8).

In February 1775, in a last-ditch effort, William Pitt, in the company of Franklin, proposed yet another plan to the House of Lords to avert an armed conflict between Britain and America. Responding to a scathing attack on Franklin by Lord Sandwich, Pitt responded that "Dr. Franklin" was a person whom "all of Europe holds in estimation for his knowledge and wisdom and ranks with our Newtons and Boyles; who is an honour, *not to the English nation only* (my italics), but to all of mankind" (Hale, 1848, 194). This may be the source that inspired Vaughan's remarks above. Note at this point, his Whig allies still

considered Franklin to be an Englishman.

Nevertheless, despite the colonists' repeated accusations of George III's tyrannical governance, it must be said that the fact that Vaughan's publication was not censored or forbidden by the Crown is a testimony to the relative freedom of expression under the British monarchy, a freedom that would have almost certainly been denied in any other kingdom of Europe and in many nations around the world today.

Vaughan's admiration for Franklin was longstanding and without bounds, as can be seen from a long letter Vaughan addressed to Franklin on January 31, 1783 in which he calls upon Franklin to publish his memoirs, comparing him to a Caesar or Tacitus. Franklin included this letter in his *Autobiography* (BF, pp. 72-77) and it is apparent that Vaughan saw Franklin's life as a model "for the forming of future great men; and in conjunction with your Art of Virtue (which you design to publish) of improving the features of private character, and consequently of aiding all happiness, both public and domestic" (BF, p. 73) (cf. Chapter 4).

Just as with William Pitt, Vaughan's support for Franklin was also deeply political. Vaughan was another fervent supporter and enthusiastic advocate of the revolutionary causes in America but also of the republican struggles in France and Ireland (Vaughan's father was an Irish Protestant dissident). One can imagine that Vaughan's Massachusetts-born wife must also have had some influence on his support for the Americans and he makes it clear that the Whigs viewed the American cause to be the same as that of the British people.

Ironically, it is probably on account of the publication of Franklin's papers that Benjamin Vaughan was later contacted by the British government during the latter stages of the American War of Independence to serve as a go-between in negotiating a peace treaty between the British delegation, led by Lord Shelburne (with whom Franklin had formerly been on good terms), and the American negotiators, represented by Franklin, Silas and Lee.

Several years after the American war, in 1786, Vaughan was elected as a member of the American Philosophical Society, which had been founded by Franklin in 1743, showing that the political ties between America and English Whigs were not completely severed as a result of the dramatic schism between the two countries.

Interestingly, despite his strong links with American revolutionaries and his political activism, he was elected MP for a borough in Wiltshire in 1792. Two years later, however, he was arrested for treason on the grounds that he had participated in a plot to organize an invasion of England by French revolutionary forces. Upon his release from prison, he travelled to France and Switzerland and, following this, sailed off to Massachusetts where he settled for a time in Boston and then, finally moved to Maine. He was eventually elected as a fellow

of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and, in 1813, was nominated as a member of the American Antiquarian Society. He died in Maine in 1835.

1.2 *Political, Miscellaneous and Philosophical Pieces Written by Benjamin Franklin*

According to Oberg (1995, 210-218), in 1776, Vaughan began collecting Franklin's papers from his closest friends in London including Joseph Priestley, Jonathan Williams and others. One wonders whether Vaughan reached out to Polly Stevenson at this time for the copies of her correspondence with Franklin. If so, I have found no evidence that he did. Given that she was herself a Londoner, however, this appears a distinct possibility. Yet, in that case, one wonders why she would not have handed Vaughan Franklin's July 20, 1768 letter of which was in her possession. It was never published in Vaughan's or any other edition of Franklin's papers until Willcox's 1972 edition of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 15, *January 1 through December 31, 1768*, New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1972, pp. 175-178. By that time, virtually no linguists were interested in Franklin's RMS and, to my knowledge, these documents have never been exploited from a linguistic perspective.

By December of 1776, the first draft of the book was terminated. At Franklin's request, however, Vaughan decided to expand the book even further, requesting that he include a number of unpublished papers. Vaughan opted in favour of this expansion, but the decision obliged the editor to recast the entire book. Work began in January 1777 and terminated a year and a half later. Oberg (1995) writes that Vaughan sent the first 320 pages to Passy on April 9, 1779, but Franklin continued to add more of his writings until July. The volume was finally completed during the fall and published on December 7, 1779.

As mentioned above, Franklin's reformed alphabet proposal appears in chapter 5, at the very end of Vaughan's edition, under the subtitle: "Papers on Miscellaneous Subjects." It bears the heading "A reformed mode of spelling; Names of the Letters express'd in the reform'd *Characters*. Sounded as now in *Sounds and Characters*" (pp. 467-478, not including two unnumbered pages of the tables, indicated in chapter 26 as pp. 470a and 470b).

In this study, I have concentrated on Benjamin Vaughan's 1779 edition. On the introductory page, Vaughan entitles Franklin's treatise as follows: "A Scheme for a new Alphabet and reformed mode Spelling, with Remarks and Examples concerning the same, and an Enquiry into its uses, in a Correspondence between Miss S----n and Dr. Franklin written in the *Characters of the Alphabet*" (Vaughan, 1779, 466-467). With the exception of the charts and notes Franklin sent to Polly Stevenson in July 1768, this is the earliest and, in my view, the most faithful version of Franklin's notes to have survived. Despite his own self-

criticism regarding the printing of the alphabet, Vaughan did a wonderful job reproducing Franklin's script. He obviously did so using the six lead characters that Franklin had cast at Watts' Printing House in the summer of 1768 (cf. Chapter 8 for context).

Vaughan must have had access to copies of the same body of the notes and tables that Franklin had sent to Polly Stevenson on July 20, 1768. It is likely, however, that Vaughan never received Franklin's July 20th letter, an error-laden first attempt to use his alphabet. In addition, it contained personal information about Polly's mother. Secondly, Franklin almost certainly did not want this letter to be printed on account of these inaccuracies in transcription (cf. below).

On the contrary, just as we saw for the New England and New York town records, Franklin's transcription errors offer important clues that reflect his natural accent but also his motivations for collaborating with Polly Stevenson and her important role in devising the alphabet. Thankfully, after her death in 1795, her personal correspondence to Franklin was donated by her family to the American Philosophical Society where it is still conserved in its archives (Franklin, 20 July, 1768a). It was thanks to the Society's rich archive collection and the assistance of their librarians that I was able to access these precious documents.

Once in America, in 1806, Benjamin Vaughan published a second edition of Franklin's orthographic reform in volume 2 (pp. 357-366) of his three-volume work, *The Complete Works in Philosophy, Politics and Morals, of the late Dr. Benjamin Franklin*. Franklin's scheme reappears in Jared Sparks' classic ten-volume *The Works of Benjamin Franklin* (Boston, 1836-1840). However, none of these editions contained the missing elements from Polly Stevenson's papers. Franklin's transcriptions of the two stanzas of Addison's poem, "The Campaign," were absent from the 1768 papers and were only added afterward, suggesting that other transcriptions may have existed which have since been lost.

1.3 Franklin's Idiolect: British or American?

Like those before him, Looby (1984, 13) argues that Franklin's reform reflected his own American variety and stresses that the purpose of his reform was originally intended to "establish greater uniformity between England and America and thus strengthen trans-Atlantic ties" but that his alphabet became, in the course of time, an "instrument of political separation. For Franklin's new alphabet represented not the phonetic norms of London, but those of Philadelphia; it transferred the center of linguistic authority from England to America."

Although I share many of Looby's points of view, on this crucial point I thoroughly disagree with the points he makes here for all the reasons presented so far in this book. First, the possible traces of Philadelphia English on his RMS

model are negligible to say the least. Furthermore, there is scant evidence that his own idiolect was profoundly affected by his long stay there.¹ Finally, given the sociolinguistic attitudes among the London high society of the time, the idea that a “provincial” could even imagine to devise an proto-phonemic alphabet, based on a nascent American variety English as opposed to a London model, is improbable to say the least. Such an enterprise would certainly have been considered preposterous by the London elites (cf. Chapter 14). For this reason, the logic behind the idea that the codification of an American model would “strengthen trans-Atlantic ties” by establishing “greater uniformity between England and America” is difficult to follow.

In this section, I give some background information which sheds light on Franklin’s sociolinguistic insecurity with regard to his native New England variety of English vis à vis the cultivated London English norm (cf. Le Dû & Le Berre, 2019; cf. Chapter 10).

Most scholars have accepted that there was little difference between standard English in the American colonies and in England. One of the first to propose this viewpoint was George Krapp in his *The English Language in America*, Vol. 2, who asserts:

In preparing his alphabet, Franklin pretty certainly had no notion of describing a kind of speech which was distinctive for America as contrasted with the speech of Great Britain. Perhaps there was no such distinction in his day. In his mind, standard American English differed not at all from standard British English. Nor can Franklin’s phonetic records be taken as intentionally representing Boston speech, in which city he was born in 1706, or Philadelphia speech, in which city he had lived since the time of his early manhood. If any local characteristics of American speech are indicated in Franklin’s phonetic scheme, they are not there intentionally, but by inadvertence. (Krapp, 1925, 4)

Krapp makes some extremely valid points here and I would agree that Franklin perceived the English spoken in the colonies to be “English” and, although, in his third letter to Webster (1789) and in a letter to Hume (1760) he criticizes the overuse by Americans of deverbal nouns, I feel confident he had little consciousness of speaking a specifically “American” English per se. Recall the many positive opinions of the 18th-century English travellers to North America who raved about the purity and excellence of the English spoken by all ranks of

1 By way of comparison, my own father, like Franklin, was born in Massachusetts, also of British parents. Like Franklin, he left Massachusetts at the age of 17 (for England, however, not Philadelphia). And yet, although he could speak fluent Lancashire dialect (which he described as “another language”), and despite having travelled extensively in Europe and especially America, and never returning to Massachusetts except for visits, his Massachusetts accent remained with him his entire life. From the evidence I have collected in Part III, my distinct impression is that Franklin held on to Boston accent until the end of his days. At a paritary level, it is clear he was attached to it.

settlers (Read, 1933, 1980). I argued that this view was largely comparative and due to the survival of highly fragmented “broad” varieties of English throughout Britain. In Chapter 2, we saw that, even as a child, he was obsessed with language propriety, hence his fixation on mastering the grammar, syntax, vocabulary and style current among the best-educated speakers in London (i.e. Addison and Steele’s *Spectator*). Learning a specific phonological system does not seem to have been an immediate priority to him during his young manhood, however, probably on account of the multitude of British dialect pronunciations he heard around him at the time.

If there are “characteristics of American speech” in his RMS scheme, they are there by “inadvertence” and, as stated in the introduction to this chapter, identifying these “Americanisms” in his RMS, which tend to be conservative English dialectal characteristics in the first place, will be the objective of Chapter 28.

As I explained in Chapters 11 and 12, the data assembled in Part III have convinced me that there existed functionally separate paritary and disparitary koinés in New England during the 17th century. Although these clearly developed out of the English input varieties of southern and eastern England, and were perceived as such by native-born Englishmen by the mid-18th century, the colonial and London varieties were already evolving in different phonological directions. As mentioned in the last chapter, the model that was coming into vogue in London during the last quarter of the 18th century was characterized by numerous innovations that had formerly been frowned upon in polite society. I have explained this elsewhere by the rise of a growing middle class of merchants and artisans of common origin.

We saw in Part III that the kinds of popular innovations which were making their way into the speech of proto-RP London English were resisted for a longer time in New England by the more formally educated. This is flagrant in the rhymes of New England poets. Among these London innovations are the following:

- a. the raising of *Meat* words: ME /ɛ:/ > /i:/
- b. the raising of *Fleece* words: ME /ɛ:/ > /i:/ (for New England exceptions, cf. Chapter 17)
- c. the monophthongization of *Wait* words: ME /ai/ > [æi ~ ei] to [ɛ:] (since late 16th c.)
- d. the centralization of *Mercy* words: /ME ɛr/ > [ɛɪ ~ æɪ] > [əɪ ~ ɜ:]
- e. the lowering of /æ/ before /l/ in *Calm* words: ME /alm/ > [ælm] > [ɑ:(l)m]
- f. the lowering of /æ/ before nasals; ME *aunt*, *ance*, *aunce*, *anch*, etc. > [ɑ:]
- g. the lowering of /æ/ before fricatives: ME /as/, /aθ/, /að/, etc. > [ɑ:]
- h. the lowering of /æ/ before /r/ in *Start* words: ME /ar/ > [ɑ:(r) ~ ɑ:(r)]

- i. the lowering of /æ/ after *Wa-* + /r/ + /nd ~ nt/...: EME [wæ-] > [wa] > [wa:-]
- j. the lowering of /ʀ/ > /ʌ/ in *Strut* words: ME /u/ > [ʀ] > [ʌ] (cf. Chapter 22)
- k. the weakening and loss of post-vocalic /r/... (cf. Chapters 23, 27 and 28).

See the treatment of a) and b) in Chapters 16 and 17, c) in Chapter 23, d) in Chapter 18 and e) through i) in Chapter 19, j) in Chapter 20, Chapter 21, Chapter 22 and k) in Chapter 23 and Chapter 27. I hasten to add that a good number of these innovations were already present in the 17th-century New England feature pool, but were considered “vulgar”.

Franklin was thus certainly sensitive to some of these differences in register and variety, but apparently not all. Nevertheless, my impression is that, to English ears, Franklin’s accent was still perceived to be fundamentally “English,” that is southern English, and it is not certain that native English speakers could identify his geographical origin with certainty, but many features of his accent probably came across to them as old-fashioned and, perhaps, even a bit rustic, hence backwards. This explains his linguistic insecurity (cf. section 1.4 below, and Chapter 14, Volume I). Nevertheless, as I have stated on numerous occasions, Samuel Johnson described that Lord Young was acclaimed to be the best speaker of the House of Commons, and yet, he pronounced “great” [gɹi:t] (Bowen, 1905). So, in terms of provincialisms, Franklin was quite obviously not alone.

Grammatically and lexically, of course, there was no question in anyone’s mind that Franklin was a highly educated man. In Chapters 2 and 4, one has the distinct impression that, at least during his youth, Franklin was far more impressed by clear articulation, eloquence (based on rhetorical features, standard grammar and vocabulary), than any given accent. Having said this, he does speak of a “proper accent” and “correct” pronunciation in his June 1789 letter to the trustees of his Philadelphia Academy with reference to a Mr. David James Dove, who had had sixteen years of experience teaching grammar in a school in Chichester back in England. Dove was hired to teach English at his Philadelphia academy (cf. Chapter 14 for details about his “English school”; Franklin to the Founders of the Academy, June 1789).

1.4 Franklin’s Linguistic Insecurity

In the footnote on the first page of Franklin’s RMS, Benjamin Vaughan (Franklin, 1779, 475) writes that Franklin had intimated to him that the Americans had difficulty “to learn the proper sound” of words “from want of public examples.” This points to a certain degree of linguistic insecurity on Franklin’s part as well as Americans and other provincials. Vaughan reveals that Franklin occasionally spoke on matters of language and, more importantly, he indicated that his ambition was to publish a pronouncing dictionary on the model of his proto-

phonemic RMS system that, he believed, very importantly, would be useful *not only to his countrymen in North America* but, very significantly, also for him personally. I'm sure he was thinking of other British provincials as well. The implication is that, on account of their geographic isolation, Americans simply did not have access to the "proper sound of certain words."

Dr. Franklin used to lay some little stress on this circumstance, when he occasionally spoke on the subject. A dictionary formed on this model *would have been serviceable to him, even as an American; because from the want of public examples of pronunciation in his own country, it was often difficult to learn the proper sound of certain words* (my italics), which occurred very frequently in our English writings; and which of course every American understood as to their meaning.

In light of everything we have considered in the preceding chapters, Vaughan's footnote tempers Allen Walker Read's accounts of 18th-century British visitors who raved about the purity and unity of American English. Extrapolating from this, Looby (1984, 5) writes that Franklin, in his youth, was unsure about how to pronounce certain words which he had only ever seen in writing.

Like other provincials; Franklin had no choice but to try to imagine, internally, how to pronounce words that he encountered for the first time in print – words such as those he learned when, in his youth, he studied the prose of the *Spectator* in order to improve his language. But because English spelling deviated, then as now, from customary pronunciation, Franklin and other colonists must have guessed incorrectly in many cases, and acquired habits of pronunciation that conformed to the way the words were spelled but clashed embarrassingly with the way those words were actually pronounced in London. The inevitable result of this would have been that when Franklin arrived in the British capital as a young printer's apprentice, with a vocabulary largely acquired from reading, his speech would have immediately betrayed him as a provincial, and what is worse, a provincial with pretensions to sophisticated diction – pretensions which his abnormal pronunciations tended to undercut. We can imagine the mortification he felt as a young man whose ambition was to enter the society of the learned and the powerful.

Looby's point here is well taken although, as he says, all provincials were faced with the same difficulties. However, it must be stressed that problems of pronunciation were not posed by native English words.² As I have argued elsewhere, the difficulties in pronunciation that Franklin and his fellow citizens encountered, both in America and in Great Britain, almost certainly involved polysyllabic, Latinate vocabulary, the correct use of which, then as now, was a mark of breeding and education. Furthermore, this vocabulary was often incomprehensible to the less educated, which provided the ruling classes with

2 Webster (1789, 57-58) comments about the thoroughly "Saxon" vocabulary used by the Connecticut Yankee farmers.

a linguistic means of highlighting their superior social and economic status. Furthermore, the problems were thus largely confined to the difficulty of placing tonic stress on the proper syllable: *con'gratua^late*, *congratu^lations*, *con'gratula^tory* (now GA), *con'gratulat(o)ry* (now RP), *de'gene^ration*, *to de'gene^rate* [dɪ'dʒɛnə^ˌɪɛt] but *a de'generate* [dɪ'dʒɛnə^ˌɪət] and so on...

Vaughan and Franklin's argument here is echoed by Webster in his *Dissertations* but with a significantly different twist: why should Americans imitate Londoners when they are so far away and, secondly, why should Americans copy the accents of people whose accents change so quickly according to the fashions and whims of the English court and stage? (For more on Webster's views, see Chapter 29 and 30.)

Proof of Franklin's linguistic insecurity is visible in his response to David Hume's criticisms about his use of deverbal nouns, a trait which the British speakers associated with colonial American English. In his response Franklin humbly acquiesces and concurs.

I thank you for your friendly admonition relating to some unusual words in the pamphlet. It will be of service to me. The "pejorate," and the "colonize," *since they are not in common use here, I give up as bad* (my italics); for certainly in writings intended for persuasion and for general information, one cannot be too clear; and every expression in the least obscure is a fault. The "unshakeable" too, though clear, I give up as rather low. The introducing new words, where we are already possessed of old ones sufficiently expressive, *I confess must be generally wrong* (my italics), as it tends to change the language; yet, at the same time, I cannot but wish the usage of our tongue permitted making new words, when we want them, by composition of old ones whose meanings are already well understood. The German allows of it, and it is a common practice with their writers. Many of our present English words were originally so made; and many of the Latin words. In point of clearness, such compound words would have the advantage of any we can borrow from the ancient or from foreign languages. For instance, the word inaccessible, though long in use among us, is not yet, I dare say, so universally understood by our people, as the word uncomeatable would immediately be, which we are not allowed to write. *But I hope, with you, that we shall always in America make the best English of this Island our standard, and I believe it will be so.* I assure you it often gives me pleasure to reflect how greatly the audience (if I may so term it) of a good English writer will, in another century or two, be increased by the increase of English people in our colonies. (Franklin to Hume, 1760)

He states that because vocabulary such as "pejorate" and "colonize" are not used in England, he gives them up as "bad" and he asserts that the "best English of this island" should also be America's standard. Written a mere eight years before he proposed his 1768 RMS to Stevenson, this stands as the ultimate proof that Franklin intended his orthographic reform to reflect the cultivated London English pronunciation, and certainly not his own.

Franklin's ambition to produce a pronouncing dictionary was probably encouraged by a fad which was well underway by 1768 and which ultimately

extended the notion of linguistic prescriptivism to phonology, a notion that is engrained, consciously and unconsciously, in all speakers' minds today. In an instant, one can often judge the social, ethnic, geographic origins and educational levels of a given speaker after hearing only a few words or phrases (cf. Giles CAT, Chapter 11). How much easier this exercise must have been in 18th-century England at a time when dialect speech was so prevalent! Joan Beal (2010, 23 quoting Benzie, 1972), tells us that "five times as many works on elocution appeared between 1760 and 1800 than had done so in the years before 1760." The social class to which Franklin belonged was directly concerned by this new consciousness of linguistic "correctness."

Many late eighteenth-century authors acknowledge this, advertising their work as suitable for those engaged in 'business' or 'trade'. Withers writes that 'the importance of a correct Mode of Expression in Business is sufficiently obvious' and recommends his work to 'Shopmen, Clerks and all who are engaged in the Transactions of commercial Life' (1788: 31), noting on the same page that Britain is 'a Country where the Industrious may become affluent, and the Affluent ascend to the chief Employments of the State'. It was precisely the newly affluent, now able to 'ascend to the chief employments of the state', who both felt the need for and could afford the elocution lessons and printed guides which were to proliferate in the last few decades of the eighteenth century.

Franklin was clearly one of these rising stars of humble origin she describes here and, as we saw throughout Part I, he did not hide his desire to be accepted into the higher ranks of London society (cf. Synopsis and General Conclusions for another more general discussion of his linguistic insecurity).

2. A Review of Prior Linguistic Studies of Franklin's RMS

Section two of this chapter provides an overview of the linguistic studies of Franklin's RMS. The earliest of these was offered by Noah Webster (1789) and the most recent by J. Stamp (2015). These studies fall into two basic categories, however. The first consists of articles or chapters that focus only on Franklin's RMS. Among these are Alexander Ellis (1869), Kemp Malone (1925), William Angus (1935), Charles Wise (1948), Jimmy Stamp (2013) and Hope C. Dawson and Brian Joseph (2025).

The second category concerns studies of the history of American or British English where the authors comment on relevant phonological features described in Franklin's RMS. Examples of this approach are seen in Charles Grandgent (1899) and George Krapp (1925). As I mentioned previously, none of these studies had access to Benjamin Franklin's first letter to Polly Stevenson nor to the vocalic and consonant tables he sent her in the summer of 1768. As explained in Chapter 15, André Mazarin (2020) is the latest of those in this second category.

2.1 Noah Webster

The earliest reference to Franklin's *Reformed Mode of Spelling* was made by Noah Webster in his *Dissertations on the English Language: With Notes, Historical and Critical* (1789). Three years beforehand, Webster had met Franklin at his home in Philadelphia where the two men discussed their respective ideas about the state of the English language, questions of orthography and pedagogy as well as the future of the English language in the new American Republic. During this exchange of views, Franklin presented his positions regarding his reformed alphabet and gave Webster all of his notes as well as the six new characters he had conceived for his alphabet. It is quite evident that he believed at this time that Webster would apply the principles of his RMS. We shall also see below that, in a letter written to Franklin in 1775, Polly Stevenson Hewson had strongly urged Franklin to launch his RMS program in America (Hewson to Franklin, December 12, 1775b). As a result of the war, Franklin only received the letter in 1785, a year prior to his meeting with Webster. I have wondered whether this may have encouraged him to contact Webster.

When Webster published his book in 1789, he praised Franklin in his preface for having inspired him to engage in the modernization of English orthography in America and dedicated the book to Franklin. Although Webster paid lip service to the idea of "one sound for one letter," it appears that he was either not at all convinced by Franklin's arguments or, more likely, he did not fully understand the underlying principles of his RMS. Like Sheridan (1761, 1762) before him, who also spoke of the merits of "one sound for one letter," he never applied the principle and ultimately rejected Franklin's six new characters and, without mentioning Franklin by name, he bluntly criticized the English orthoepists who had attempted to introduce new characters into the English alphabet in the past. Nevertheless, Webster did include Franklin's RMS as the final chapter of his book.

Franklin's influence on Webster will be discussed more fully in Chapters 29 and 30.

2.2 Alexander Ellis

The earliest study of Franklin's spelling reform from a diachronic linguistic perspective is Alexander Ellis' *Early English Pronunciation, with Especial Reference to Shakspeare [sic] and Chaucer* (1869). Ellis considered colonial American English to be "archaic" in comparison to the standard English of England (but certainly not its dialects) and, in this regard, he views Franklin's spelling reform as a reflection of earlier English pronunciation (late 17th century or early 18th century) and it is this dimension of Franklin's work that interests

him, not the origins of American English per se.

Despite later criticism of his work by dialectologists such as Joseph Wright, Ellis' transcriptions of English dialect using his "palaeotypes" have been shown to be of exceptional value (1869) and Ellis is now recognized as one of the great English phoneticians of the 19th century. For this reason alone, his account of Franklin's spelling reform, although it is only six pages in length, merits particular attention. Furthermore, it contains a full transcription of Franklin's work and a number of interesting observations. Nevertheless, Grandgent (1899, 209) indicates that Ellis' analysis was based on a "very faulty edition" of Franklin's reform (i.e. Jared Sparks 1836-1840?).

Ellis also makes the link between Franklin and Sir William Jones to which I shall return in Chapter 29, most notably with respect to their transcriptions of Addison's 1704 poem "Campaign" (lines 287-291) which he describes as "parodied thus in Pope's 'Dunciad'" (lines 261-264). Ellis' account of Franklin's reform proposal is short enough to quote here in its entirety:

Dr. Franklin's scheme of phonetic writing (*supra* p. 48), though hasty and unrevised, is too interesting to be omitted. His correspondence with Miss Stephenson [sic] contains a common sense, practical view of the necessity and usefulness of some phonetic scheme, and gives short convincing answers to the objections usually urged against it. The spelling would have required careful reconsideration, which it evidently never received. But in the following transcript it is followed exactly. As *a specimen of the English pronunciation of the earlier part, although written after the middle, of the 18th century, it is of sufficient importance to justify the insertion of the paper at length in this place* (my italics). The symbols are, as usual, replaced by their palaeotypic equivalents, and for convenience of printing the following table given by Franklin is somewhat differently arranged, although the matter is unalterable of the Reformed Alphabet. (1869, 1058)

If Ellis considered Franklin's RMS to reflect the speech of "the earlier part," one wonders what he would have thought of the analysis of Franklin's idiolect presented in Part III. Following his study of Franklin's scheme, Ellis' turns to Noah Webster's *Dissertations* (1789) and notes Webster's recognition of Franklin's reform and its important influence on him (cf. Chapter 29-30). He then repeats his belief that many aspects of American English reflect the pronunciation of England not only of the early 18th century but even that of the latter part of the 17th century. As we have seen, his keen intuitions are supported by many of the findings that were made in Part III.

Noah Webster's English Dictionary has so recently become popular in England that we can scarcely look upon him as belonging to the 18th century. But having been born in Connecticut in 1758, his associations with English pronunciation in America are referable to a period of English pronunciation in England belonging quite to the beginning of the 18th, if not even to the latter half of the 17th century.

The recent editions of the Dictionary all shew a “revised” pronunciation, so that the historical character of the work in this respect is destroyed. The following extracts from a special and little known work by the same author are valuable for our purpose, as they convey much information on the archaisms which were at least then prevalent in America, and distinguish in many cases between American and English pronunciation. (Ellis, 1869, 1063)

Put another way, he sees American English of the 18th century to be an example of “colonial lag,” a term coined by Albert Marckwardt in his *American English* (1958). Having said this, it is perhaps Wise (1948, 101) who, paraphrasing Ellis’ views on colonial English, is the first to use the term “lag” with reference to the conservatism of American English: “the speech of colonials remains relatively static, lagging behind in respect to the changes taking place in the mother country.”

Ellis mentions that the “revised pronunciation” in the most recent editions of Webster’s dictionaries has essentially destroyed their historical value. We shall see in Chapter 30 that this is largely due to his son-in-law, an anglophile in matters of language, who actively watered down the spelling reforms that Webster had introduced in earlier editions.

2.3 Charles Grandgent

Like Alexander Ellis and the majority of specialists, in his 1899 article “From Franklin to Lowell: A Century of New England Pronunciation” (thirty-three pages), Charles Grandgent assumes that Franklin’s spelling reform reflects not only American English but, more specifically, Massachusetts English of the 18th century. Nevertheless, he alludes to Franklin’s life in Philadelphia and London and the possibility of his being influenced by these varieties. As we have seen in Part III, this assumption has some merit.

As a Massachusettsan, however, Grandgent’s observations of 19th-century Massachusetts English are primordial, and I have cited many crucial details he provides in the preceding chapters, which provide clearer insight into the genesis of American English. He was not only a phonetician but also intimately familiar with the accents of elderly New England rustic-speakers he had heard in his youth. As the title indicates, Grandgent compares the details of Franklin’s spelling reform with his description of the New England English vernacular reflected in James R. Lowell’s *Biglow Papers* (1848). Lowell (b. 1819) was an intellectual and militant abolitionist from Boston. His book fiercely condemned the institution of slavery, slave traders and the coming Mexican-American War which Lowell interpreted to be a pretext to extend slavery throughout the regions which later became the southwestern United States.

Lowell’s book combines long passages of prose and poetry all of which are

written in the rustic vernacular language he heard in Boston during his youth. Grandgent attempts to link Franklin and Lowell's work in order to reconstruct earlier 18th- and 19th-century Massachusetts English. In so doing, he makes numerous valuable remarks and his insights and observations provide depth and context to the entire discussion.

Overall, however, Grandgent's focus on Franklin's RMS is relatively superficial. It is nevertheless the first attempt by an American phonetician to place the phonological data of his system in a broader comparative and diachronic context. For that reason, and as we saw in Part III, particularly regarding "New England short o," it is of considerable importance with regard to his precise description of the vowel.

2.4 George Krapp

George Krapp's *English Language in America* (1925) is a masterpiece of its kind and a forerunner of many of the methodologies used by linguists today. Michael Montgomery (2001, 102-103), for instance, pays tribute to his work acknowledging his contributions and placing special emphasis on Krapp's use of early vernacular texts.

I am particularly indebted to the second volume of his book on the historical phonology of English in North America. Krapp lived at a time when many features of the older 19th-century American vernaculars could still be heard and his intuitions and references to regional American pronunciations are of the utmost value. Although there are some aspects of his book which are now dated, his methodological approach and careful analysis offer many solid common-sense observations which are still very valuable for specialists of dialectology and the history of American English. It is his exploitation of the New England and New York town records as well as the rhyme schemes of 18th-century American poets that inspired me to do the same.

Krapp's views and his comments on Franklin's orthographic reform are more nuanced than either Ellis' or Grandgent's in the sense that Krapp believed 18th-century standard English in America to be virtually the same as in England. Indeed, he also argues that the current dialectal distinctions between the New England, Midland and southern American English were minimal during this same early period, a view which, in the course of my research, I have come to share to a large degree. Part III offers many examples of this relative unity (cf. Chapters 11 and 12) and it is quite clear that many of the aspects formerly associated with New England English can still be heard in vernacular southern American English.

This can be partly explained by the fact that the sources that have come down to us are mainly written in the disparitary registers of the American koines. The

paritary register is and was, comparatively-speaking, and by its very nature, rarely ever preserved in writing (until the 19th century) for the simple reason that it was considered unworthy to be consigned to writing (cf. Chapters 10 and 11). Interestingly, James R. Lowell was one of the first writers to buck the tide and, the fact that he was a close friend of Mark Twain, has led some scholars to speculate that it was Lowell's influence that encouraged him to do the same and thus spark a literary revolution in which, for the first time in the history of English literature, the voices of those on the bottom rungs of the Great Chain of Being were finally heard.

As with Grandgent, Krapp's remarks and discussions about Franklin's transcriptions are scattered throughout the book but are always pertinent. His observations are intended to support his hypotheses regarding, for instance, the quality or quantity of given vowels, diphthongs or consonants. He consistently provides insightful and accurate descriptions of Franklin's reform, for example, the oscillation between [æɪ ~ ɛɪ] in *Square* words.

Unlike Ellis, Angus and Wise, however, and despite the value of their contributions, neither Krapp nor Grandgent devote specific sections of their respective studies to a focussed presentation of Franklin's RMS or detailed analyses of his transcriptions.

2.5 Kemp Malone and Carl Van Dorn

I have lumped Kemp Malone's four-page article, "Benjamin Franklin on the Spelling Reform" (1925), and Van Dorn's three-page piece, "Benjamin Franklin" (1938, 425-427) together because they are so short and because they only present very general summaries of the RMS. Van Dorn is contented to give a broad introduction of the RMS and provides Franklin's vowel and consonant table without analysis.

Kemp Malone, on the other hand, is more incisive and concludes that:

Franklin's alphabet.... Is not rigidly scientific, nor does it provide for all the simple sounds of the language. But this does not keep it from being a production highly creditable to its author... Franklin worked out his problem with great acumen, and exhibits a phonetic insight very rare for the eighteenth century.

He then adds a note of criticism stating that "He was able to keep his symbols down to 26 only by doing violence to his phonetic scheme."

In signalling his reservations about the scientific value of Franklin's work he joins Ellis to some degree. Nevertheless, he does not go far enough in examining the details of the reform and, especially, what lies beneath its surface, that is, Franklin's proto-phonemic approach.

He does make a number of significant observations which shall be cited on occasion in the discussions which follow, i.e. stating Franklin's **ʏ** symbol had a

value of [ə] and not [ʌ]. I shall argue that, phonetically, it appears to have had [ʁ ~ ʁ̥] in stressed syllables and words, [ə] when unstressed but /ʌ/ in polite London English.

2.6 William Angus

In his ten-page “Poor Richard’s Alphabet and his Pronunciation,” Angus (1935) provides a far more serious and reasoned account of Franklin’s reform than his 20th-century predecessors. While pointing out the shortcomings of Franklin’s scheme (as did Ellis and Malone), he takes the time to recognize that “his spellings frequently attempt, at least, to indicate sound-changes occasioned by stress.” We shall see, however, when Franklin does this it is only very exceptionally and most often because of inattention, his objective being to provide a full realization of each unstressed word or syllable.

Like the linguists who preceded him (with the exception of Krapp), Angus assumes the transcription reflects Franklin’s original Boston idiolect. For reasons I have indicated at points throughout Part III, the primary model for the RMS was intended to be based on London English. We shall see in Chapter 28 that there were occasional lapses revealing his native Massachusetts accent.

Angus makes a useful comment regarding Krapp (1925) and Malone’s (1935) use of the phonetic symbol [ɔ] which he states “may represent, on occasion, either our [ɔ] or our [ɒ]” (1935, 63). I have argued a similar point in my discussion of mid and low back vowels in the introduction to mid and low-mid back vowels in Chapter 20, that is, the value of [ɔ(:)], as transcribed by early 20th-century American linguists, was in fact close to or identical to IPA [ɒ(:)] which, since at least the 18th century, has vacillated with to [ɑ:].

To summarize: Angus’ article provides a concise and carefully crafted survey of the major points of Franklin’s reforms in which he makes valuable observations to which I shall return. His IPA transcription concerns only Franklin’s counterarguments in response to Miss Polly Stevenson’s September 26 outline of the potential weaknesses of his spelling reform proposals.

2.7 Claude Wise

Wise’s twenty-one-page article, aptly entitled “Benjamin Franklin as a Phonetician” (1948), is uniquely devoted to Franklin’s spelling reform and is by far the most valuable, detailed and scientific source for our purposes. His analysis, interpretation of the data and general approach and, in a number of respects, his conclusions, often conform with my own, particularly with regard to some sticky issues. Given that I discovered his article several years after I had written a first article on the subject (cf. General Introduction), I must confess

that this brought me some comfort.

His article begins with a helpful review of all the research done on Franklin's RMS prior to 1948. Since that time, however, nothing has been written on the RMS except Stamp's 2013 article for the *Smithsonian Magazine* introducing the subject to the general public (see below). He also presents relevant background information about the editions in which the RMS has appeared, starting with Benjamin Vaughan's 1779 publication and ending with Jared Spark's 1836-1840 ten-volume set entitled *The Works of Benjamin Franklin; Containing Several Political and Historical Tracts Not Included in Any Former Editions*. Wise (1948, 100) then explains that scholars who had studied the RMS had been obliged to "trans-symbolize" Franklin's phonetic material into some other form – Ellis into his paleotype, Grandgent into the American dialect Society's Alphabet as of a half-century ago, and others into varying versions of the International Phonetic Alphabet. Although they had little choice, Wise correctly points out that the consequence was that Franklin's work was coloured by these linguists' interpretations of each of his symbol. Wise got round this problem by obtaining the original plates taken from Jared Sparks' edition (1838, 296-303, VI) who had faithfully reproduced Franklin's "unusual symbols" (*ibid.*). Wise's admirably honest approach offered a great advantage for linguists who were now in better position to compare Franklin's original script with Wise's own IPA interpretations of it.

Inspired by Wise's approach, and thanks to the existence of the digitized version of Vaughan's original 1779 edition *Founders Online*, National Archives, I have reproduced Franklin's RMS as it appeared Vaughan's 1779 edition (cf. Appendices 1 and 2). This will hopefully provide the reader with greater proximity to the orthographic system Franklin imagined and the reader can thus compare my adapted IPA transcriptions of his alphabet, certain characters of which I too have "trans-symbolized" into the IPA.

Wise then presents the reproductions of Franklin's three tables (cf. Chapter 26), which reproduce the data presented in Vaughan's 1779 edition, and a complete transcription of Franklin's September 28th letter (pp. 102-109) while the rest of the study (pp. 110-119) is dedicated to his analyses, to which I shall return in Chapters 25 through 27.

2.8 C. J. Stevens

In his 1955 PhD thesis entitled "Early American Phonology," C. J. Stevens, also of the Louisiana State University, studies the earliest accounts of early American pronunciation. In his second chapter, entitled "Gentlemen Scholars," he includes an eighteen-page discussion reviewing some of the main conclusions proposed by the aforementioned scholars: Ellis, Grandgent, Angus and Wise. Although

his discussion of Franklin's reform (1955, 68-76) provides useful observations, the chapter is, in general, limited to a summary of the descriptions, comments and conclusions made by the scholars who preceded him. No new additional observations or analyses are offered nor is any complete transcription of Franklin and Stevenson's letters included.

2.9 Christopher Looby

Despite the title, Christopher Looby's article, "Phonetics and Politics: Franklin's Alphabet as a Political Design," Looby is not a phonetician nor is his article a linguistic study of Franklin's spelling reform. Rather it is a presentation of Franklin's political and ideological reasons for proposing it. For this reason, the arguments are not particularly relevant to the contents of this book from a linguistic perspective (cf. Looby's 1996 book, *Voicing America*). The value of his article and book is to provide an in-depth vision of Franklin's world, which Looby does in a very insightful and informative way.

There are few major points of his analysis with which I strongly disagree. As I have already stated below, the first is his conclusion that Franklin based his RMS model on "Philadelphia" English and the second is his assertion that the quality of the English in America was "deteriorating." Although this was Franklin's view with regard to aspects of American vocabulary (expressed in his third and last letter to Webster in December 1789), it was especially the traditional English alphabet that he condemned as being bound to "custom." Even if he admits that Franklin's 1739 outline of vernacular regionalisms are still recognizable to modern American speakers, Looby (1984, 14) is apparently confusing 18th-century non-standard English (and his prescriptive negative judgement of it) with linguistic decline.

Franklin considered language change, whether in Chinese, Italian or English, to be a normal process of evolution (cf. his September 28th letter to Stevenson). For this reason, he believed it was up to spelling reformers such as himself to correct and modernize the orthography to facilitate the task of assisting illiterates, children and foreigners not only to read and write but also to adopt correct pronunciation.

2.10 Nickola Twilley

Despite its title, "Six New Letters for a Reformed Alphabet," Nickola Twilley's article has a much broader focus than Franklin's RMS, namely, the ephemeral nature of the printed word and hence the grapho-phonemic (ir)reality of any spelling system. Only the first few pages of the article are devoted to Franklin's scheme, but no linguistic analysis is provided.

If we could use time-lapse photography to revisit the development of the 26-letter Latin alphabet used to transcribe English, we'd see that letters have been discarded, added, and reshaped almost beyond recognition. The alphabet itself is malleable, temporary, subject to reform and revision. (Twilley, 2006, 1)

She outlines his scheme and presents a nicely structured vowel and consonant table showing each of Franklin's characters accompanied by her IPA interpretations of their values (cf. Chapters 26 and 27). A photocopy of Franklin's July 20th to Polly Stevenson written in his RMS alphabet. However, the image is of such poor quality that it is unreadable, nor is any discussion offered about the contents or the phonetic value of Franklin's first attempt to use his proto-phonemic alphabet.

Likewise, another photocopy of Franklin's alphabet and his descriptions of each character is shown. It appears to be taken from Vaughan's 1779 edition (cf. Chapters 26 and 27), again without any examination of the phonetic values of each character.

The author then turns to Franklin's influence on Noah Webster, and an account of their meeting in 1786 and her apparent assumption that Webster's intended to model his own alphabet reform on Franklin's. In fact, from the very outset (cf. his first May 1786 letter to Franklin, Appendix 4), Webster clearly expressed the contrary (cf. Chapters 29 and 30).

From that point on, most of Twilley's article outlines a broad array of writing systems that include the Azerbaijani alphabet, the Osmanian alphabet, the Mormon church's Deseret script, and back to general remarks concerning Webster's attempts to create a national American spelling system. Passing remarks follow about Caxton, Bullokar, "George Bernard Shaw's fonts," "Ghoti fingers, Kingsley Read's Shavian typewriter and alphabet," "Pittman's shorthand," "the Initial Teaching Alphabet," finally culminating with a table of the IPA.

In short, despite some pertinent remarks that she makes initially, the title of this article is something of a misnomer in that the real focus of the article concerns the inability of any alphabet to keep pace with language change, a point made by Franklin in his September 28, 1768 letter to Polly Stevens.

2.11 J. Stamp

The most recent article I have found on Franklin's orthographic reform is J. Stamp's May 10, 2013 article in *Smithsonian Magazine*, entitled "Benjamin Franklin's Phonetic Alphabet: One of the Founding Father's more Quixotic Quests was to Create a New Alphabet." It was not intended to provide an in-depth study of his alphabet but rather offers an overview for the benefit of the general public. In this respect, it provides a very helpful introduction to the

subject but offers no new or revealing information.

The author's use of the adjective "Quixotic" in the title appears to be inspired directly by Walter Isaacson's sardonic comments regarding what he considered to be Franklin's naïve attempt to conceive a new phonetically-based alphabet (Isaacson, 2003, 220). Stamp's presentation of Franklin's alphabet and related IPA values seems to be taken directly from Twilley's vowel and consonant table.

Stamp's article was not intended to provide an in-depth study of Franklin's alphabet but rather to offer a clear overview of the RMS for the benefit of the general public. In this respect, it provides a very helpful introduction to the subject.

2.12 André Mazarin

In Chapter 15 of Part II, I presented an outline of Mazarin's twenty-one-page article entitled "The Developmental Progression of English Vowel Systems, 1500–1800: Evidence from Grammarians" (2020). In this highly original and insightful study, the author proposes a synthetic diachronic analysis of orthoepists' studies between the years 1500–1800 which provides a conceptual framework for many of the observations made in Part III. Mazarin is the only linguist, aside from Alexander Ellis (1869), to have included both Benjamin Franklin and Noah Webster among the forty-eight British orthoepists he studies.

Although his focus is not on Franklin's RMS, his occasional observations are always very pertinent, for instance, when he expresses his surprise that the speakers just a few miles from Boston in nearby towns spoke a different (i.e. older) variety, while Franklin spoke "like a Londoner." Without stating it directly, Mazarin seems to have intuitively understood that the model of pronunciation reflected in Franklin's orthographic reform was *not* that of his fellow Massachusettsans and, of course, in this I am in total agreement. It is one of the major points of this book. We shall see the degree to which this is true in Chapters 26 and, especially, 27. He also points out the mixed nature of 18th-century Massachusetts speech, where *Meat* words were often still pronounced [ɛ:] rather than [i:] (both were in the 17th-century Massachusetts "feature pool"). We have already studied the reasons for this in Part III

Although his references to Franklin are dispersed throughout the article and are thus incidental, his primary contribution is to improve our overall understanding of the diachronic history of English phonology; insight is largely gleaned from his observations of what he calls "continental witnesses," namely, French, German, Dutch and Danish grammarians who described English as they perceived it between the late 16th century and 17th centuries. Their observations offer valuable phonetic details, especially regarding the precise quality and length of certain vowels. Most of the particulars of his observations have been

presented in the preceding chapters of Part III.

2.13 Hope C. Dawson and Brian D. Joseph

In December 2025, an article entitled “Benjamin Franklin and the Language Sciences” was published online by the *Proceedings of the Linguistic Society of America*. The paper begins with a description of Franklin as a Founding Father, statesman, philosopher, scientist and finally revealing his relatively unknown vocation as a phonetician. The authors then outline the background and contents of Franklin’s *Reformed Mode of Spelling*, describing Franklin’s principle of “one letter for one sound” which, as we have seen (Chapter 13), was not his idea at all. One of the most praiseworthy points made in this article is the authors’ recognition of the originality and scientific value of his RMS from a modern linguistic standpoint, a point that has rarely been stressed. They go on to make brief observations about the pronunciations he proposes for the characters of his alphabet.

The authors briefly discuss Franklin’s request for assistance from Polly Stevenson to correct possible errors in his grapho-phonemic scheme (cf. Franklin’s July 20, 1768 letter to Polly Stevenson below). However, they do not consider whether his scheme was based on London English or his own American variety and apparently assume it reflected his own Boston variety. None of the transcribed letters are studied from the viewpoint of historical phonology.

The article owes much to Nickola Twilley’s brief review of the RMS (see above) and to Van Doren’s even shorter three-page outline (cf. above). Following Twilley, the authors rightly remind the reader of Noah Webster’s indebtedness to Franklin in launching his own orthographic reform, but go no further (cf. Part V).

3. An Overview of Franklin’s *Reformed Mode of Spelling*

In this section, I present an overview of the organization and content of Franklin’s *Reformed Mode of Spelling* (pp. 467-478). To view Vaughan’s original edition, see Appendix 1. For my IPA transcriptions of Franklin and Stevenson’s correspondence and Franklin’s transcription of Joseph Addison’s “The Campaign,” see Appendix 2.

The first page of the RMS (p. 467) begins with Benjamin Vaughan’s Preface in which he provides details about the difficulties he encountered representing the printed characters and typographical details as well as other miscellaneous remarks, including a short but vitally important footnote in which Vaughan mentions having found a reference to “a certain Sir Thomas Smith” in Franklin’s notes. As I explained in Chapter 13, Smith’s identity appears to have been unknown to Benjamin Vaughan. Smith was in fact the first major English

orthoepist to write a treatise proposing a spelling reform in his *De Recta* (1568). I argued in the aforementioned chapter that it is highly likely that Franklin consulted not only Smith's seminal work but, more especially, that of a number of key orthoepists who were also inspired by Smith during the late 16th century, such as John Hart and almost certainly John Wallis and John Wilkins during the 17th century.

In Franklin's vowel and consonant table, which appears on page 468 and is entitled "Remarks on the alphabetical table," he presents a list of each character accompanied by a phonetic description and details regarding the pronunciation of each corresponding sound. This table (printed by Vaughan) is completed by two more tables on pp. 470a and 470b (henceforth respectively Tables 2 and 3, respectively, cf. below). These are, word-for-word, nearly the same descriptions as those in the Vowel and Consonant Table which accompanied his July 20, 1768 letter to Stevenson.

On page 469, under the heading "Remarks on the alphabetical table," Franklin comments on the necessity to eliminate superfluous letters such as <c> which he replaces with <k> [k]. The explanations and observations made on pages 469 and 470 are identical to those notes and tables he sent to Polly Stevenson in July 1768 (cf. Chapter 26). For example, with reference to <c>: "In this Alphabet c is omitted as unnecessary, k supplying its hard Sound and s the soft" (Franklin, 1768b).

At this point he introduces his h-looking symbol (cf. Abercrombie's comments below), one of the six new characters he imagined would reproduce <sh> /ʃ/ but, in certain circumstances, /ʒ/. He explains how this /ʃ/ can combine with /d/ to produce the affricate <dʃ> (i.e. /dʒ/) in *dʃeems* for "James," *dʃanueri* for "January," *dʃyuant* for "giant" and *dʃentel* for "gentle." It also represents the sound of the voiceless affricate /tʃ/ for *tʃeri* for "cherry" and "chip" for *tʃip*. He then adds that z + ʃ reproduces the French sound of "the jod" in *jamais*, which he transcribes as *zʃame* (more in this below). This same passage is also found in the original 1768 document sent to Stevenson.

He then makes a series of comments which are very likely inherited from his study of Sir Thomas Smith and other orthoepists that followed him, including Hart, Wallis and Wilkins. The first point echoes the old principle of "one letter for one sound." For instance, he argues that <g> should represent only hard /g/, as in the modern IPA /dʒ/).

Thus the g has no longer two different Sounds, which occasioned Confusion; but is, as every Letter ought to be, confined to one; - The same is to be observed in all Letters, Vowels, and Consonants, that wherever they are met with, or in whatever company, their Sound is always the same. - It is also intended that there be no superfluous Letters used in spelling; i.e. no Letter that is not sounded. (my italics) (Franklin, 1779, 469)

Following in Smith's tradition (and also Hart, Gil and Wilkins... cf. Chapter 13),

Franklin invented six new characters to represent specific sounds (see below) to avoid the use of superfluous characters but also to represent sounds that are not reflected in the present orthography, most notably <aa> for [ɒ: ~ ɑ:] and <y> /Δ/ [ə ~ ʔ]. He continues writing that:

And this Alphabet, by six new Letters, provides that *there be no distinct Sounds in the Language without Letters to express them.* (my italics)

Franklin's observations are fundamental to his RMS and have for too long remained unnoticed. Previous linguistic studies have not made the connection between Franklin's statements here and the earliest orthoepists' revolutionary axiom: "one sound for one letter," an axiom that has never been successfully applied by any reformer since William Caxton.

He then shifts the discussion to the manner by which one should transcribe short and long vowels. Here he recommends doubling a vowel to indicate length (<ee> for [ɛ:]). Later, however, he proposes a diacritic for ê for [ɛ:] showing that he had not yet settled on a consistent strategy.

As to the difference between short and long Vowels, it is naturally expressed by a single Vowel where short, a double one where long; as for "mend" write "mend," but for "remained" write "remeen'd;" (end of page 469) for "did" write "did" but for "deed" write "diid," etc. (pp. 469-470)

This short statement includes quite a remarkable innovation in terms of transcription. Indeed, to my knowledge, Franklin is the first orthoepist to adopt <i> and <ii> to transcribe [i ~ ɪ] and [i:], probably thanks to his knowledge of French and other continental languages, rather than the usual English <ee> spelling for [i:]. The same is true of his choice to use <e> and <ee> to represent [ɛ] and [ɛ: ~ ɛ̃:] which was normally represented by <a> in English spelling. This allowed him to use <a> for [æ] and <aa> for [ɒ: ~ ɑ:]. He used the same strategy for back vowels with <u> representing [u(:)].

As I noted in the General Introduction, this strategy was also followed by the IPA over a hundred years later. In 1791, Walker adopts the same system of notation for his *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary*. Could he have gotten wind of Franklin's innovation by this time? This is impossible to tell. We shall see that Franklin's friend, Sir William Jones also adopted the same approach in his *Dissertation on the Orthography of Asiatick Words in Roman Letters*. Nevertheless, as we shall soon see, Franklin indicates vowel length for only two vowels, <i> versus <ii> and <e> versus <ee>. The quantity he intended for his <aa> character is somewhat ambiguous but almost certainly long.

To his detriment, Webster refused to follow Franklin's model and the system he devised was, as a consequence, faulty from the very beginning (cf. Chapters 29 and 30). The advantage of Franklin's model was obvious and scientific.

On the following page, at the top of page 470, Franklin goes into considerable detail to describe the 18th-century pronunciation of the *Price* diphthong which I have interpreted as [ɹi ~ əi] in his Boston variety, but /Δi/ [Δi ~ əi] in the London variety on which his RMS was based.

What in our common Alphabet is supposed the third vowel, i, as we sound it, is as a Diphthong; consisting of two of our Vowels joined; [viz.] *u* as sounded in “unto,” and i in its true Sound: Any one will be sensible of this, who sounds those two Vowels *u* and ends ii. The true Sound of the i is that we now give two e in the words “deed, keep.”

Before continuing with this discussion, it is significant that this is the only passage in Vaughan’s edition that does not correspond to the one he sent to Polly Stevenson in July 1768. At some point, Franklin sent Vaughan an amended version of this paragraph which, in Polly’s copy, was originally prefaced with the notice “to be altered.” It read as follows:

What in our common Alphabet is suppos’d the third Vowel, i, as we sound it is not a Vowel but a Diphthong, consisting of two of our Vowels join’d, viz. a as sounded to be in *all* or u as sounded in “unto” and e: any one will be senaltered sible [sic] of this, who sounds those two Vowels ae or ue [sic] quick after each other; the Sound begins *aw* or *u* and ends *ee*. The true Sound of the i is that we now give to e in the words *deed, keep, &c.* (remainder missing)

The differences are very significant because he suggests here that *Price* words had two possible realizations. The first variant he proposes is the <a> of *all*, which he associates with the realization of <aw> here. This <aw> corresponds to his doubled <aa> character which I interpret to be [ɑ: ~ ɒ:] (cf. below) followed by [i]: [ɑi ~ ɒi], possibly the latter. He gives the second variant the pronunciation of <u> as in “unto” followed by the true value of /i/, that is, [ɹi: ~ əi:]. Considering that Massachusetts <u> corresponded to [ɹ] at the time, I have concluded that his pronunciation was precisely the same as Cooper’s realization of it (cf Mazarin, 2020, 17) and my transcription of Wilkins’ Apostles’ Creed (Chapter 13). He doubles down on this by repeating that the first element of the diphthong could be <aw> or his <*u*> character [ɹ] followed by the true value of <e> that is [i:]. I interpret his “true value” of [i:] to imply that there was an “untrue” value of [i:] which may be short [ɪ].

Given his proposal to distinguish short and long <i> of “did” as **did** and “deed” **diid** there are perhaps two interpretations: **did** might be tense [i], as discussed in Chapter 16, and [ɪ] might be intended the same sound in unstressed syllables. True <ee> would thus be the long tense or full pronunciation of the vowel. This threefold interpretation /i:/ versus /i/ with a lax [ɪ] allophone is the pattern I have adopted in most of my transcriptions of Franklin’s RMS. See also his match of *sin* ~ *seen* and his rhyme of *deep* ~ *ship* (Chapter 16).

The question is whether he proposed this [ɑi ~ ɒi] variant because he heard

London speakers using it and thought it might be an acceptable variant. We have also seen that it is still recorded this way for Essex and London in the SED but also for Northamptonshire where father, uncle and older siblings were born. It is not impossible that the diphthong has changed little since that time.

My impression here is that Franklin changed his mind at some point, perhaps with Polly's advice and, in the amended 1779 version, makes no reference to [ɔi] (cf. Chapter 27). We shall see that this [ai ~ ɔi] corresponds fairly well to MacMahon's [ɔ:i] realization for London (below) (MacMahon, 1998).

Another detail that merits our attention is Franklin's observation of the /i/ sound "*that we now give to e in the words deed, keep, etc.*" hides a deeper message. In view of the fact that during his lifetime, a number of *Fleece* words were still pronounced as [ɛ: ~ ɛ:], it strikes me that his remark "*that we now* [my italics] give" may imply that, in his mind at least, the complete shift from the older [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] to [i:] was only being completed during Franklin's lifetime (cf. Chapter 17 for examples) and the older realizations were still fresh in his memory. Examples of this clearly appear in the 17th-century New England town records but more strikingly in the New Englanders' rhymes studied in Part III.

Coming back to the first passage (Vaughan's 1779 edition, Table 2), Franklin's choice of "into" as a key word to pronounce **u** suggests to me that this is an error for the <un> of "unto" is due to a misreading by Vaughan. This is confirmed by Franklin's 1768 version of this same table in which "unto" found and *not* "into." It is also supported by the key words he gives for his <**u**> character which include unto in Table 2 (Franklin, 1779, 470a) along with umbrage, and final -er, presumably in words such as hunter, winter, etc. In the table on page 470b, he states that it is pronounced like "huh." In such unstressed environments, I interpret this <er> to be closer to [ə ~ əɪ] than to [ɪɪ]. See my interpretation of <**syn**> as [ʃən ' ʃɪ].

In Chapter 13, we saw that this choice of his **u** character was inspired by John Wilkins' work who uses the same symbol to represent the same [ɪ ~ ɪ] sound. In Chapter 16, I pointed out in a *Nota Bene* that in his own Boston realization of this, he was intent on respecting the rules of cultivated London English. For this reason, in all my IPA transcriptions of his RMS, I render this **u** character as phonemic London /ʌ/ and **ui** [əi ~ ʌi], even though he did not pronounce them this way himself. Idem. for his **aai** (1768) and **aau** (1768/1779), which seem to have been influenced by London English. Nevertheless, considering the vast number of broad English dialects at the time, the distinction between [ɪi ~ əi] and [ʌi] would probably have been viewed as minimal by many.

In the same vein, a long footnote on this same page, Vaughan deliberates on the phonetic values of long <ee> and short <e> in which he expresses some doubts about Franklin's analysis:

For certainly name is not pronounced as *nem*, in the expression *nem. con*.

Corresponding to the sound in *men*. — Some critics may probably think that these two sets of sounds are so distinct as to require different characters to express them: since in *mem*, pronounced affectedly for *ma'am* (madam) and corresponding in sound to *men*, the lips are kept close to the teeth, and perpendicular to each other; but in *maim*, corresponding in sound to *name*, the lips are placed poutingly and flat towards each other: A remark that might be applied with little variation to *did* and *deed* compared. (cf. Franklin, 1779, 470)

Here Vaughan does not accept Franklin's implication that "maim" or "name" share the same vocalic quality as "nem" or "men." Vaughan is quite forceful about this ("For certainly"...). However, I take Franklin's pronunciation of *name*, *lane* and *maim* to be pronounced with a long [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] whereas the <e> of *men*, *nem* or *mem* was also pronounced [ɛ]. Vaughan's description of the lips being "kept close to the teeth" and "perpendicular to each other" leads one to suspect that he is referring to his own pronunciation which may have had closer realization such as [mɛn] for "men," just as in mid-19th century Dorset. Mazarin (2020, 5), quoting Bellot (1586), records close realizations of [ɛ] for *Dress*. Cross-dialectally, the phonetic range must have been [ɛ ~ ɛ̣ ~ ɛ̤], the latter allowing the *pen-pin* merger [i].

Vaughan's comment regarding the short <e> of <mem>, which he describes as an "affected" pronunciation of "ma'am," presumably [mɛm] is interesting and would appear to be another example where [æ] was raised to [ɛ] in natural New England speech but, importantly, the fact that Vaughan qualifies it as "affected" is in reference to contemporary London speech where this raised [ɛ(:)] (< [æ]) was also common (cf. examples of this in Walker and in Franklin's speech, Chapter 17).

Note that Franklin abandons the traditional Massachusetts [ɛi] pronunciation of "maim" and "remain'd," preferring the innovative monophthongized [ɛ:]. Recall that this [ɛ:] pronunciation of *Wait* words was an innovation with its source in late 16th-century London (Mazarin, 2020, 1). In Chapter 23, we saw that some of Franklin's 17th-century Massachusetts compatriots still pronounced *Wait* words with [æi], like Alexander Gil, while the dominant pronunciation appears to have been [ɛi]. Both pronunciations were probably common at the time of his birth in 1706 and we can be quite certain that many older New Englanders still pronounced it [ɛi ~ æi] into the 18th century, but it clearly was on the wane. Both [ɛ: ~ ɛi] realizations can be observed in 18th-century New England poetry and were thus solidly anchored in the New England feature pool. Franklin records only [ɛ:] for <ai> spellings in his RMS, another indication that he intended his model to conform to the more innovative London English pronunciation.

Likewise, Vaughan does not accept the suggestion that the vowels of *did* and *deed* share the same quality and are only differentiated by length. In both

cases, his comments that these vowels should have different characters may tell us more about Vaughan's pronunciation than it does about Franklin's (Vaughan was born in Jamaica and was the son of an Irish Protestant dissenter). Could this mean that Vaughan heard "did" as [dɪd] and "deed" as [di:d], just as in RP and GA? One thing is certain here, however, in his reform, Franklin has abandoned all conservative [e: ~ ɛ:] pronunciations of *Fleece* words and [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] realizations of *Meat* words that we encountered in the New England poets' rhymes in Part III. To conclude this point, Franklin's implication that *did* ~ *deed* and *mem* ~ *maim* vowels were qualitatively the same disturbs Vaughan, as it would any contemporary GA or RP speaker. In Part III, we saw that the vowel of *Wait* words were probably pronounced as [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] or [ei] in Massachusetts and Franklin pronounced them as the former.

In Chapter 26, we shall see that Ellis (1868, 75, cited by Wise, 1948, 117) confirms the accuracy of Franklin's description of *men*, *lend*, *name*, *lane* being realized as [ɛ(:)], stating simply "and that is very nearly the modern practice." Support for Ellis and Franklin's observations that these vowels are identical in quality comes from Kenrick, who wrote the following only five years later (Kenrick, 1773, iv). After presenting his list of vowels and key words (*ibid.*), he summarizes the data as follows:

Under one or other of the numbers composing the above table, are comprehended all the species of distinct articulate sounds contained in the English language. *Not that they differ altogether equally in quality; several differing only in time* (my italics). There are no more than eleven distinct vocal sounds of different qualities in English; ten of the numbers specified in the table being expressed by the long and short modes of uttering our five vowels; as exemplified in the following words:

A.		barr'd		bard
E.		met		mate
I.	short in	hit	long in	heat
O.		not		naught
U		pull		pool

Later in his book, Kenrick (1773, 24) states these particular minimal pairs differ only in terms of "quantity or time" (more on this in Chapters 27 and 28).

Finally, Vaughan ends the footnote on this page with an interesting comment regarding "The copy from which this is printed, ends in the same abrupt way with the above, followed by a considerable blank space; so that more perhaps was intended to be added by our author. [E.]" (Franklin, 1779, 470).

This proves that the notes Franklin's provided to Vaughan lacked descriptions

of *Wait*, *Choice* or *Mouth* diphthongs. Were some of his notes lost? Probably not, because the missing descriptions are also lacking in the documents he sent to Stevenson in 1768. The logical conclusion is that he never found the time to complete his description of the diphthongs. Perhaps he was secretly convinced or discouraged by Stevenson's criticisms and simply gave up on the project altogether. We can only deduce the proposed pronunciations of these diphthongs from the transcriptions furnished in his and Stevenson's letters and in his transcription of Addison's "Campaign" poem (cf. Appendix 2).

The heading on page 470a (no pagination for the original) is "Table of the Reform" (henceforth Table 2), in which Franklin presents his symbols along with corresponding key words and minimal pairs. Although he does not comment on the length of the vowels of *folly* and *ball*, I concluded that the vowel of *folly* was short [fɒli] and the vowel of *ball* was long [bɔ:l]. I based this conclusion on the fact that, elsewhere, he transcribes the word *all* as *aaal* [ɔ:l], as does Stevenson.³ Secondly, when presenting his minimal pairs, the first word appearing in the table always has a short vowel and the second a long vowel: *mem* [mɛm] ~ *maim* [mɛ:m], *lend* [lɛnd] ~ *lane* [lɛ:n ~ lɛ:n], *sin* [sɪn] ~ *seen* [si:n], *did* [dɪd] ~ *deed* [di:d] and so on. As stated above, the implication is that they differ only in terms of quantity. It is hard to tell whether this was strictly a conservative feature restricted to New England or whether London area speakers also shared this trait. Kenrick, who was a native of Hertfordshire, apparently shared the same tense short vowels as Franklin...

On page 470b (likewise, no pagination), he provides another table, entitled "Manner of Pronouncing the Sounds" (Table 3) which gives important details that complete the descriptions and comments made on pages 468 and 470a regarding the pronunciation of each symbol highlighting the acoustical nature of each vowel. These include the rounding or unrounding of the vowel, high or low position of the tongue in pronouncing it and, in some cases, the voiced or unvoiced quality of certain consonants. His descriptions are not systematic nor is the vocabulary he uses to describe these characteristics well-chosen. Nevertheless, I am convinced that Franklin intuitively understood many concepts regarding phonology long before his time (more on this in Chapters 26 and 27).

In Chapter 26, I reproduce these three tables of Franklin's vowel and consonant descriptions not only as they are presented in Benjamin Vaughan's 1779 edition but also as Franklin initially defined them, that is, in three consecutive lists side-by-side within one table that he sent to Polly Stevenson in his initial July 20, 1768 letter.

3 In my discussion of [ɒ:], I stressed that [ɑ:] was a variable of it and was probably the older realization in *Taught* and *Law* words.

3.1 Guiding Principles of his Reform

One of the key principles of Franklin's reform was his belief that bad spellers actually spell English best! Noah Webster quotes Franklin as having argued this point on several occasions. "This remark of the Doctor is very just and obvious. 'A countryman writes *aker* or *akur* for 'acre'; yet the countryman is right, as the word ought to be spelt; and we laugh at him only because we are accustomed to be wrong.'" (*Dissertations*, 1789, 408, footnote). Elsewhere, Webster recalls another of Franklin's ideas: "I once heard Dr. Franklin remark, "that those people spell best, who do not know how to spell; that is, they spell as their ears dictate, without being guided by rules, and thus fall into a regular orthography" (*ibid.*).

This point is made again in his September 28th letter and he presents the argument that his simplified spelling system would facilitate the teaching of reading and writing and he stresses that:

The difficulties are only in the beginning of the practice: when they are once overcome, the advantages are lasting. To either you or me, who spell well in the present mode, I imagine the difficulty of changing that mode for the new, is not so great, *but that I might perfectly get over it in a week's writing.* (my italics)

As for the majority who cannot spell properly, "they naturally fall into the new method already" in the sense that poor spellers spell phonetically and, for this reason, adopt his orthographic scheme very quickly given that it is phonologically-based ("one sound, one letter"). He goes on saying that "their present bad spelling is only bad, because contrary to the present bad rules, under the new rules it would be good," that is, their so-called errors thus only highlight the imperfection of the current spelling system.

This opinion remained with Franklin throughout his life. In a letter to Jane Mecom in 1786, said to have been his favourite sister, he wrote the following anecdote to assuage her embarrassment about her poor spelling (cf. Chapter 30, for similar citations by Franklin).

You need not be concern'd in writing to me about your bad Spelling: *for in my Opinion as our alphabet now stands, the bad Spelling, or what is call'd so, is generally the best, as conforming to the Sound of the Letters and of Words.* To give you an Instance, A Gentleman receiving a Letter in which were these Words, "Not finding Brown at hom, I delivered your Meseg to his y f." The Gentleman finding it bad Spelling, and therefore not very intelligible, call'd his Lady to help him read it. Between them they pick'd out the meaning of all but the y f., which they could not understand. The Lady propos'd calling her Chambermaid; "for Betty," says she, "has the best knack at reading bad Spelling of any one I know." Betty came; and was surpriz'd that neither Sir nor Madam would tell what y, f was; "Why" says she, "y f spells Wife, what else can it spell?" *And indeed it is a much better as well as shorter method of Spelling Wife, than by Doubleyou, i, ef, e, which in reality spells Doubleyifey.* (my italics) (cited in Looby, 1984, 22-23; cf. Franklin, July 26, 1786b)

Of course, this orthographic reform was another of his philanthropic projects to “do good” for mankind, which he believed should be the principal role of religion and, by extension, secular government. Franklin’s objective was that his new orthography should serve as a pedagogical tool to assist both English and non-English speakers to read and write English with a minimum of effort. In so doing, he also hoped to provide a model of English pronunciation (i.e. presumably the accent of educated London speakers) for dialect speakers in Britain but also the inhabitants of the American colonies.

3.2 A Proto-Phonemic Approach

Based on this reasoning, and true to his principles, Franklin streamlined his orthographic system in a way which eliminated redundant characters and limited each character to only one sound. In doing so, he is merely repeating the stated goal of Sir Thomas Smith, John Hart, Alexander Gil, John Wallis, John Wilkins and others. Although Franklin never cites these illustrious predecessors directly, I feel confident that this concept was inspired by them (cf. Chapter 13 for more detail). Nevertheless, I have also pointed out that he used a similar conceptual approach in conceiving his “Art of Virtue” (“one definition for one virtue”). As a result, it also places him squarely in the British orthoepistic tradition, advocating that the model for Americans should be “the best English of this island” (cf. 1760 letter to Hume).

If one acknowledges the fact that Franklin is not the inventor of the concept of “one sound for one letter,” his theorization of the way English orthography should be reformed prefigures certain basic concepts that are central to modern phonology and the IPA itself. To summarize what has been said:

- a. “every Letter ought to be confined to one sound”
- b. “their Sound” should be “always the same”
- c. “no letter should be used that is not sounded.”

We saw above that he provides key words to illustrate his pronunciations which he opposes in order to highlight and contrast vocalic length or fundamental differences in quality (i.e. *sin* ~ *siin*; *did* ~ *diid*, etc.). Crystal (1991, 258) defines the phoneme similarly as “the minimal unit in the sound system of a language according to traditional phonological theories.” Trask (1996, 264) defines it as “the smallest unit that can make a difference in meaning” (i.e. smallest unit of sound, a phone, or phonetic segment).

Over a hundred years before the concept of the phoneme was theorized, Franklin’s RMS marks a big step forward in presenting the idea that a single sound can serve as “a basic unit of meaning,” which can be contrasted via “minimal pairs” (*did* ~ *deed*; *sin* ~ *seen*...), and thus mark the difference from another phoneme, for instance, /i/ encompassing the allophones [ɪ ~ i ~ iː] versus /i:/ [iː].

In Part II (Chapter 13) and Part III (Chapter 21), we saw that Wallis and Wilkins used the same minimal pairs, *folly* ~ *fall* to illustrate this distinction in vowel length /ɒ/ ~ /ɔ:/ at a time when vowel length alone could still be a criterion for defining a phoneme. They considered the vowel quality to be identical. I proposed that Franklin probably borrowed this minimal pair from these othoepists. This appears to be confirmed by his original 1768 table (cf. Appendix 1), but here he gave *ball* and *fall* both of which he bars for some reason, followed by *John* and *folly*. In Vaughan’s edition he proposed *John* and *folly* (short vowels) beside *ball* and *awl*.

More specifically, in keeping with his “one sound for one letter” and thus “no superfluous letters,” he designed six new characters to represent modern digraphs to represent voiceless <th> [θ], voiced <th> [ð], <sh> [ʃ], <ng> [ŋ], <aa> [ɒ: ~ ɑ:] and <ɥ> [ʌ ə] (phonemic /ʌ/), with short and long <i> and <e> vowels being distinguished either by doubling the vowel when long (<ii>, <ee>) or, only in the case of /ɛ:/, by adding a circumflex <ê>. This last hybrid model clearly shows that the diacritic came as an afterthought and that he had not come to a firm decision when he drafted his scheme in 1768.

3.3 Six New Characters

Franklin then presents and describes each character of his six new characters corresponding to IPA symbols /ɒ ~ ɑ/, /ʌ/,⁴ /ʃ/, /θ/, /ð/, /ŋ/. In particular, the goal was to suppress the corresponding digraphs <sh>, <th> and <ng>. He also replaces “hard” <c> with <k> and “soft” <c> (i.e. [s]) with <s>.

Fig. 25.1 Franklin’s six new characters. Image extracts from Moyogo (2022), Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Franklin%E2%80%99s_additional_letters_as_in_A_scheme_for_a_new_alphabet.svg#/media/File:Franklin%E2%80%99s_additional_letters_as_in_A_scheme_for_a_new_alphabet.svg

Franklin’s new characters and IPA equivalents						
Franklin’s characters	α	ɥ	ʃ	θ	ð	ŋ
IPA equivalent	/ɒ:/ [ɒ(:) ~ ɑ(:)]	/ʌ/ [ə ~ ʌ]	/ʃ/	/θ/	/ð/	/ŋ/
My RMS Equivalent	<αα>	<ɥ>	<ʃ>	<θ>	<ð>	<ŋ>
Key word	<all>	<cut>	<she>	<thing>	<this>	<wing>

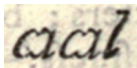
4 Most other studies have given the value of /ʌ/ to Franklin’s character. Malone opted for /ə/ and, based on our discussions in Chapter 22 on New England Short u and o, I have given it the older [ʌ] value prior to being lowered to [ʌ]. /ʌ/ is its phonemic representation for London English and in his RMS.

Because I was unable to reproduce three of Franklin’s six new symbols, I was obliged to replace them with IPA equivalents in my own renditions of Franklin’s script. The true quality of these phonemes pose no obvious problem given that /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/ (or /ɲ/) have been stable in English for centuries. However, the inherent instability of vowels places us on shaky ground and, as pointed out by Claude Wise (1948), this presents an obvious methodological problem in interpreting the qualitative value of his *y* and *aa* vowels. As in Part III, wherever I have doubts, I express them to the reader.

There is a discrepancy with regard to his *aa* vowel in that he includes three variant forms of it in various transcriptions. For instance, in his letter of July 20, which we have described as a trial run, he includes two forms of this vowel. He transcribes “brought,” in his own manuscript writing, as two separate vowels, that is, *braat*, while “not” is transcribed with a fused *aa* vowel. The latter fused *aa* is the norm that is used by both Franklin and Stevenson in the three letters and in his transcription of Addison’s “The Campaign.”

Finally, however, the fused *aa* is doubled in the word “all,” i.e. *aaal*. This is another example showing that Franklin’s system was still quite unstable. Generally speaking, I interpret the three variant to represent a relatively long [ɔ: ~ ɑ:] vowel. He must have sensed that this was particularly true for “all,” which he transcribes several times in the same way on several occasions. One concludes that he would have done the same for *fall*, *ball* and *awl*.

Fig. 25.2 Renditions of Siamese <aa> (images from Vaughan, 1779).

1) 	2) 	3) 
July 20	July 20	Sept. 26 Sept. 28

As Abercrombie (1981, 210) observed when discussing Franklin’s RMS in his article, “Extending the Roman Alphabet: Some Ortho-graphic Experiments of the Past Four Centuries,”

the total effect is very pleasing, but when examined in detail, three of the new letters, those for sh and the two the sounds reveal a disturbing similarity both to each other and to h. Franklin was himself a printer, and should have avoided such pitfalls. John Hart, about whom we know little except that he was Chester Herald, had much more success with his new letters, in spite of Bullokar’s structures.

Fig. 25.3 Franklin's h-like characters (images from Vaughan, 1779).

 = [h]	 = [ʃ]	 = [θ]	 = [ð]
---	---	---	---

I would submit, however, that Franklin designed these characters very consciously because he perceived them to represent, at least to his ear, relatively similar sounds:

- a. First, they are all fricatives: [h] a voiceless glottal fricative, [ʃ] a voiceless palato-alveolar fricative, [θ] a voiceless dental fricative (and not interdental, see below) and [ð] the voiced counterpart of [θ]. Note in passing that, to represent these last two symbols, Franklin uses a convention employed by orthoepists long before him, that is, spelling <dh> for [ð] and, as would be expected, <th> for [θ]. This could be yet another sign of earlier orthoepists influence on him.
- b. Note too that, according to his scheme, under fricatives, Franklin presents these consonants in the following order (cf. Figure 26.1 and Figure 27.1, Chapters 26 and 27): /h/, /ʃ/, /s/, /z/, /θ/, /ð/, /f/, /v/. As such, the common acoustic feature they all share is the (partially obstructed) flow of air which Franklin calls “aspiration.” Since his characters for /s/, /z/, /f/, /v/ are the same and pose no problems in terms of phonetic interpretation, this leaves /h/, /ʃ/, /θ/, /ð/, the last three being digraphs in traditional spelling.

Surprisingly, he has no phoneme for voiced palato-alveolar /ʒ/, however. This would most likely explain why he viewed the affricates [tʃ] and [dʒ] as consonant clusters consisting of two separate phonemes. In this regard, Franklin renders orthographic <ch> as **tf** [tʃ] and <j> as **df** for [dʒ]. This dual use of voiceless [ʃ] rather than voiced [ʒ] is linked to either his inability to hear the difference between them or, as Wise suggests, his obliviousness to the existence of voiced or voiceless consonants more broadly.

If there is a single major weakness in Franklin's system, it is this inability to identify /ʒ/ as a phoneme. It is the one case where Franklin contradicts himself by providing a digraph for what is in fact only one phoneme. Part of the reason for this could be that he views this [ʒ] sound as being “French.” This explains his choice of *jamaïs* as a key word, a word he transcribes by blending voiced [z] with voiceless [ʃ]: **zʃame**. As with [dʃ] above, he must have assumed that the voiced quality of /d/ and /z/ combined with /ʃ/ replicated the voiced palato-dorsal [ʒ].

Nevertheless, we saw that Orbeck (1927, 69, 79) provides evidence showing that there may have been a tendency on the part of some 17th-century speakers to devoice this [ʒ] in certain environments, and this may explain Franklin's

difficulty in recognizing the true quality of this voiced sound: *deuishan* [dɛ'vɪʃən] for “division” (Groton, 1678), *diuishen* [dɪ'vɪʃən] “division” (Dedham, 1661), *devisonall* [dɛ'vɪsənəl] (Dedham, 1661) (Orbeck, 1927, 69), *deuishans* [dɛ'vɪʃəns] (Groton, 1686) but also *prouishan* [pɹɔ'vɪʃən ~ pɹə'vɪʃən] for “provision” (Groton, 1691), *prouishone* [pɹɔ'vɪʃɹn ~ pɹə'vɪʃɹn] (Groton, 1693) (ibid., 79). All of these examples are restricted to *-tion* endings, however.

Nevertheless, unlike Wise, I do believe Franklin had an intuitive understanding of voiced and voiceless consonants and he proves this by using a string of terms (“dense,” “full,” “thick” for “voiced” versus “thin” for “voiceless”) to designate these meanings in his tables. Even if the terms lack precision, they demonstrate his consciousness of the voiced-voiceless distinction in all other contexts, if not for /ʒ/.

3.4 Franklin's and Stevenson's Transcriptions

Pages 471 through 477 of Franklin's RMS present seven pages of transcriptions. The first consists of two verses from Joseph Addison's “The Campaign” (1704) and is followed by an exchange of letters between Stevenson and Franklin dated September 26 and September 28, 1768.

On page 471, under the heading of “Examples of writing in this Character,” Franklin transcribes Addison's poem dedicated to Lord Marlborough's resounding victory over King Louis XIV's forces at the Battle of Blenheim in 1704. These versus are all the more important given that Franklin's father, Josiah, and his uncle Benjamin Sr. were fervent Whigs and great admirers of Lord Marlborough. Just as Cromwell had taken down King Charles I, Marlborough had clipped the wings of the tyrannical King of France, the so-called “sun-king” and perhaps the most fervent defender of the Divine Right of Kings. As a reminder, Charles I was Louis XIV's uncle. His sons, Charles II and James II, were Louis' cousins and it is at Louis' court that James II found refuge following the Glorious Revolution of 1688. I have stated elsewhere that the references to Blenheim was almost a refrain among Whigs (see below).

Here I have only indicated the text as it is presented in traditional orthography. I have given the IPA transcription beside the original 1779 version in his reformed alphabet (cf. Appendix 2). This topic will be discussed in another light in Chapter 30 (cf. also Volume I, Part I, Chapters 1 and 2, for sociohistorical contextualization).

So when some angel, by divine command,
With rising tempests shakes a guilty land;
(Such as of late o'er pale Britannia passed)
Calm and serene, he drives the furious blast;
And pleased th'almighty's orders to perform,
Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm.

So the pure and limpid stream, when fowl with stains
 Of rushing torrents and defending rains,
 Works itself clear; and as it runs refines,
 Til by degrees, the floating mirror shines,
 Reflects its flower, that on its border grows
 And a new heaven in its fair bosom shows.

(Franklin, 1779, 471; for Franklin's transcription of these stanzas as it appears in the RMS, cf. Appendix 1; my IPA transcription of these stanzas is found in Appendix 2)

Like Addison (also a Whig), Franklin's uncle Benjamin had also composed a long poem honouring Marlborough's victory at Blenheim. Unfortunately, I was not able to find a copy of it. The inclusion of Addison's verses was certainly intended to signal Franklin's political sympathies. I believe it was a not so veiled code between Whigs, at a time when they were struggling to uphold the principles that had been the cornerstone of the English Bill of Rights, namely the limitation of the absolute power of kings. During this period, George II and George III as well as their allies in the House of Lords were attempting to restore the authority of the Crown and Whigs accused these pro-royalist forces of trying to whittle down the social and political advances made after the Glorious Revolution, namely, the sovereignty of the people over an absolute (Catholic) monarchy.

It is for this reason that Sir William Jones, a good friend of Benjamin Franklin's and a fellow member of the "Honest Whigs Club" in London (cf. Chapter 29), also chose the very same passage to transcribe his own phonetic alphabet in his treatise entitled *A Dissertation on the Orthography of Asiatick words in Roman Letters* (1786). Again, I take this to have been a wink and a nod to Franklin but also a sign that Jones had also studied his RMS proposal published only seven years before his own *Dissertation* (cf. Chapter 26). If so, Jones' idea to adopt the Roman alphabet to transcribe "Asiatick" languages may have been initially inspired from Franklin's work. It very well may have resulted from the many discussions in which the two were engaged during their bi-monthly, Thursday-evening meetings in London, meetings which continued until Franklin's fateful and definitive departure for Philadelphia in early 1775.

Polly Stevenson's September 26, 1768 response to Franklin's July 20th letter, in which he requests her assistance and opinions regarding his orthographic proposal, appears on page 472. The letter consists mainly of her blunt critique of Franklin's orthographic system and why she is against its application. In her response, she demonstrates that, in less than two months, she had mastered his scheme and did so with less hesitation and far fewer errors than Franklin had made in his first letter (cf. below). Here I have converted her transcription into modern orthography (cf. Appendix 1 for the 1768 and 1779 versions and Appendix 2 for the IPA transcriptions of the texts).

Dear Sir

I have transcribed your alphabet etc. which I think might be of service to those who wish to acquire an accurate pronunciation, if that could be fixed; but I see many inconveniences, as well as difficulties, that would attend the bringing your letters and orthography into common use. All our etymologies would be lost, consequently we could not ascertain the meaning of many words; the distinction, too, between words of different meaning and similar sound would be useless, unless we living writers publish new editions. In short, I believe we must let people spell on their old way, and (as we find it easiest) do the same ourselves. With ease and with sincerity I can, in the old way, subscribe myself, Dear Sir,

Your faithful and affectionate servant,

M.S. (1768)

Stevenson's blunt criticisms of the RMS eventually gave way to praise when, seven years later, while deeply involved in teaching her own children how to read, she appears to have been struck by the daunting nature of the task. It was only then that she finally understood the wisdom and practicality of Franklin's system of orthography. As we shall see in a moment, he believed his RMS could be learnt within a week's time. The following letter was written on December 12, 1775 but, as was mentioned previously, the American War of Independence was raging and Franklin would not receive this letter until 1785. In the following passage she speaks of her son.

William is grown very bookish, I cannot say he reads yet, but he is an excellent speller, the words he has learnt he does not forget, and when he attempts to spell those he is acquainted with only by sound he manages very well according to the miserable rules of the present orthography; rules that are so perpetually violated, that now my attention is call'd to it I am astonish'd at the power of memory which enables us to read and write. As I reckon you are soon to be sovereign, and lawgiver in the Empire of America, *I pray you establish your alphabet that my grandchildren may attain the rudiments of learning more easily.* (my italics) (Stevenson to Franklin, December 12, 1775b)

In an interesting and significant twist, a few lines later she claims ownership of the alphabet "I find that by *our alphabet* (my italics) I can convey a new sound to you with precision, which it would be impossible to do by the common rule of spelling, so my *uncommon* learning is useful."

This means that Franklin did not receive this letter until 1785. This passage is particularly interesting in that, only two years before the drafting of the US Constitution, Polly's change of heart may have rekindled Franklin's interest in relaunching his orthographic reform. For this reason, it is probably not a coincidence that he met with Noah Webster the following year to discuss a spelling reform with him (cf. more on this in Chapter 29).

Franklin's reply to Polly's September 26th letter came a mere two days later. In a three-page response, Franklin offers detailed counter-arguments to her criticisms. The length of his response (pp. 473-478) leads one to suspect that his pride may have been piqued by the forthrightness of her statements and outright rejection of his system. He obviously placed great stock in her opinions and it may be one of the principle reasons, aside from the tense political situation and his age, that he never pursued the project any further.

One also senses that Polly knew Franklin intimately enough that she felt confident he would take no offense to her honest reply. As such, this may have been something of an intellectual jousting match between the two. After all, we have seen how fond Franklin was in his youth of "disputing" (cf. Chapter 2) and there may be a bit of this here.

Dear Madam,

The objections you make to rectify our alphabet, "that it will be attended with inconveniences and difficulties" is a natural one; for it always occurs when any reformation is proposed; whether in religion, government, laws, and even down as low as roads and wheel carriages. The true question then is not whether there will be no difficulties or inconveniences; but whether difficulties may not be surmounted, and whether the inconveniences will not, on the whole, be greater than the inconveniences. In this case, the difficulties are only in the beginning of the practice: when they are once overcome, the advantages are lasting. To either you or me, who spell well in the present mode, I imagine the difficulty of changing that mode for the new, is not so great, *but that I might perfectly get over it in a week's writing* (my italics) As to those who do not spell well, if the two difficulties are compared, [viz] that of teaching true spelling in the present mode and that of teaching the new alphabet and the new spelling according to it; I am confident that the latter would be by far the least. They naturally fall into the new method already, as much as the imperfection of their alphabet will admit of; their present bad spelling is only bad, because contrary to the present bad rules, under the new rules it would be good. The difficulty of learning to spell well in the old way is so great, that few attain it; thousands and thousands writing on to old age without ever being able to acquire it. T'is, besides, a difficulty continually increasing; as the sound gradually varies more and more from the spelling; and to foreigners it makes the learning to pronounce our language, as written in our books, almost impossible.

Now as to "the inconveniences" you mention. The first is; that "all our etymologies" would be lost, consequently we could "not ascertain the meaning of many words." Etymologies are at present very uncertain; but such as they are, the old books would still preserve them, and etymologists would there find them. Words in the course of time change their meanings, as well as their spelling and pronunciation; and we do not look to etymology for their present meanings. If we should call a man a knave and a villain,

At this point in the letter, Benjamin Vaughan adds a footnote concerning

Benjamin Franklin's ambition to prepare a dictionary using his phonetic alphabet as a model and which would have been useful to him and his fellow Americans because of a lack of "public example" of what he regarded as the proper pronunciation of words which appeared regularly in English writings and which Americans could not pronounce "correctly." As pointed out previously, I sense that the reference here is to polysyllabic, Latinate vocabulary and this presents another clear example of Franklin's linguistic insecurity (more on this below).

Footnote (editor's remark) *Dr. Franklin used to lay some little stress on this circumstance, when he occasionally spoke on the subject. A dictionary formed on this model would have been serviceable to him, even as an *American*; because from the want of public examples of pronunciation in his own country, it was often difficult to learn the proper sound of certain words, which occurred very frequently in our English writings; and which of course every American understood as to their meaning. p. 475

(continued from the previous citation)... he would hardly be satisfied with my telling him, that one of the words originally signified only a lad or servant, and the other an underploughman, or the inhabitant of a village. It is from present usage only, the meaning of words is to be determined.

Your second inconvenience is that "the distinction between words of different meaning and "familiar sound would be destroyed." That distinction is already destroyed in pronouncing them; and I rely on the sence [sic] alone of the sentence to ascertain, which of the several words, similar in sound, I intend. If this is sufficient in the rapidity of discourse, it will be much more so in written sentences; which may be read leisurely; and attended to more particularly in case of difficulty, than we can attend to a past sentence, while a speaker is hurrying us along with new ones.

Your third inconvenience is, that "all the books already written would be useless. These inconveniences would only come on gradually, in a course of ages. You and I, and other now living readers, would hardly forget the use of them. People would long learn to read the old writing, though they practiced the new. And the inconvenience is not greater, than what has actually happened in a similar case, in Italy. Formerly its inhabitants all spoke and wrote Latin: as the language changed, the spelling followed it. It is true that at present, a mere unlearned Italian cannot read the Latin books; though they are still read and understood by many. But if the spelling had never been changed, he would have found it much more difficult to read and write his own language; for written words would have stood for things; so if he would express in writing the idea he has, when he sounds the word *veskovo* he must use the letter *episcopus*. In short, whatever the difficulties and inconveniences now are, they will be more easily surmounted now, than hereafter; and some time or other, it must be done; or our writing will become the same with the Chinese, as to the difficulty of learning it and using it. And it already

would have been such, if we had continued the Saxon spelling and writing, used by our forefathers.

I am my dear friend,
Yours affectionately,

B. Franklin
London
Craven-Street
Sept. 28, 1768.

These two letters are of the greatest importance for our story and all those who have studied Franklin's reform have used them as a basis for their interpretations of his proto-phonemic approach. Only Ellis (1869), Angus (1935) and Wise (1948) have made the effort to transcribe sections of it. For my IPA transcription of this entire letter, see Appendix 2.

3.5 An Unexpected Discovery: Franklin's July 20, 1768 Letter to Polly Stevenson

In William B. Willcox's 1972 edition of Franklin's writings, entitled *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 15, *January 1 through December 31, 1768* (1972, 173-175), he published Franklin's first July 20, 1768 letter to Polly Stevenson. It was found among a large collection of letters and documents exchanged between Franklin and Stevenson which Stevenson's descendants donated to the American Philosophical Society (founded by Franklin in 1743) and where they remained for decades. This letter was later reproduced by *Founders Online*, National Archives, under the title: "From Benjamin Franklin to Mary Stevenson, 20 July 1768: phonetic spelling and transcription" (cf. Franklin to M. Stevenson, July 20, 1768a; cf. Franklin, 1768b). This is accompanied by copies of the original RMS tables, explanations and descriptions that were later published by Vaughan in 1779.

Most importantly, Franklin's first July 20th letter to Polly has never been studied linguistically. It was absent from Benjamin Vaughan's crucial founding 1779 edition and from Vaughan's 1806 second edition or Jared Sparks' publication of Franklin's writings (1836-1840).

My own discovery of this letter came in a roundabout way. While examining Polly Stevenson's correspondence with Franklin in the American Philosophical Society's online archives, I came across a digital image of the letter, the entirety of which I have included in Appendix 1. This was long before I became aware of Willcox's publication of it and its digital reproduction by the National Archives which I discovered years later.

As stated previously, this crucial letter marks Franklin's first attempt to transcribe his new alphabet using his new characters. Recall that, it was during

this same summer of 1768 that Franklin visited Watts' Printing House where he had worked previously as a journeyman in 1723. It is said that he met a few of his former colleagues who were still working there and I feel quite certain that the real point of his visit was to ask for their assistance in casting the six new lead characters he had designed for his alphabet. It is probably to thank the printers for their assistance in accomplishing this task that he bought them a gallon of sherry! (See Chapter 3 for more contextualization and a photo of the "common" printing press at which Franklin worked during the time at Watts Printing House.)⁵ He eventually handed over these characters to Noah Webster in 1786 with the hope that he would use them in applying his RMS reformed alphabet for the American people. It was not to be (cf. Chapters 29 and 30).

Here is the letter in traditional orthography (cf. Appendix 1 for the original letter and Appendix 2 for the IPA transcription):

Dear Polly,

Richmond, July 20. -68.

I intended to have sent you these papers sooner but being busy forgot it. Mr Kolman has mended dayly: but your good mother has been indisposed with a slight fever, attended with much feableness and weariness. She would not allow me to send you word of it at the time, and is now better.

I wish you to consider this alphabet, and give me Instances of such English words and Sounds as you may think cannot perfectly be expressed by it. I am persuaded it may be completed By your help. (my italics) The greater difficulty will be to Bring it into use. However, if Amendments Are never attempted, and things continue to grow Worse and worse, they must come to be in a wretched Condition at last: such indeed I think our Alphabet and Writing already in; but if we go on As we have done a few centuries longer, our Words will gradually cease to express sounds, they Will only stand for things, as the written words do In the Chinese Language, which I suspect

Pg.2

Must originally have been a literal Writing like that of Europe, but through the changes in Pronunciation Brought on by the Course of Ages, and through the obstinate Adherence of that People to old Customs, and among **others** to their old manner of Writing, the original Sounds of Letters and Words are lost,

and no longer considered.

I am, my dear friend,

Yours affectionately,
B. Franklin

5 Considering Franklin's sense of humour, the gift of sherry may have been a teasing allusion to beer money that they had forced him to pay!

When I began this study, and before I gained access to this letter, I had already come to the conclusion that Polly Stevenson's contribution to Franklin's alphabet had been far greater than we originally suspected. This impression was confirmed in this July 20th letter in which he overtly solicits her assistance, giving irrefutable evidence of Polly's vital role in the conception of his RMS.

I wish you to consider this Alphabet, and *give me Instances of such English words and Sounds as you may think cannot perfectly be expressed by it. I am persuaded it may be completed by your help.* (my italics)

I would decode this passage as follows. Franklin is essentially saying that he has designed the alphabet as well as he could and is hoping the sounds he has attributed for each of his twenty-six characters conform to polite London usage. He is essentially asking her if some characters may be ill-suited to the task. As an English woman from Kensington and a true Londoner, he believes she can identify those characters and points of pronunciation that might be off the mark (i.e. reflect his New England koine). The letter is a straightforward admission that he cannot accomplish this alone. As we shall see below, by 1775, she had changed her negative views about the alphabet, now proudly claiming joint ownership of the RMS and describing it as "our alphabet," rather than "your alphabet" in her September 26, 1768 letter.

What these letters do not reveal is that Franklin and Stevenson very likely met in person on various occasions. Recall that he had been lodged at her mother's home in Kensington since 1757 and had known her since she was eighteen.

I suspect that it was also during her visits to her mother's home that she may have made suggestions for improvements of his system or pointed out what she may have considered "errors" of pronunciation in his first transcribed letter. There are clear examples showing that Franklin did indeed "correct" his transcriptions of certain words and I suspect that she may have played a significant role in this, for instance in encouraging him to drop the [vɪ] pronunciation proposed in his 1768 manuscript and replace it with [ɹi ~ əi]. We also see Franklin has corrected some of his early transcriptions, for instance: ***Tfuiniiz*** (20/7/68) "Chinese" versus ***Tfyniiz*** (28/9/68) or ***perfektlqi*** (20/7/68) "perfectly" versus ***purfektli*** (28/9/68), etc. (cf. Chapters 26 and 27).

Franklin's request demonstrates that he must not have been entirely aware of the ways his accent differed from "acceptable" London English. I have already stated that a number of his July 20th transcription "errors" reveal tantalizing clues which highlight some of the observations made in Part III about his native Massachusetts pronunciation (cf. Chapters 26 and 27).

This brings me to a comment Stevenson makes in her September 26th letter to Franklin. "I have transcribed your alphabet etc. which I think might be of service to those who wish to acquire an accurate pronunciation, *if that could*

be fixed (my italics).” Reading between the lines, I understand this statement to imply that she is accepting the role he has given her and assumes that her own accent is a model of linguistic propriety. In other words, this seems to demonstrate that Franklin did indeed view her accent to be representative of the kind of pronunciation he felt would be ideally suited to serve as a model for all those using his alphabet in the future.

Nevertheless, the last clause, “if that could be fixed,” reflects Polly’s realism and doubts that a single mode of English pronunciation would be possible. She cannot imagine that one pronunciation could ever be imposed on all English speakers. In stating this, she was very lucid about the fact that dialectal diversity was the norm in England at all levels of society at the time. Recall Samuel Johnson’s mockery of Sheridan’s plan to publish a pronouncing dictionary in which he concludes that a common pronunciation, “cannot be fixed,” especially by an Irishman...

In Part III, we examined a good number of examples showing the phonological nature of Franklin’s Massachusetts English and how the American koine was already beginning to diverge from the London-area model, the major difference being that the New England (and colonial American koines more generally) were still largely characterized by features belonging to the Type C1 English variety which reached its peak around 1680, with Cooper being its best representative (Mazarin, 2020, 7). Meanwhile, the more innovative Type C2 and Type D (1730-1800) varieties were becoming increasingly prestigious in London. If so, Ellis (1869) was correct in assuming that the colonial American English accent was closer to late 17th-century English than to the late 18th-century innovative London variety he attempts to codify. Given that Franklin was born in 1706 (and his parents and most of his siblings in the 17th century), this is not at all surprising.

The general impression has always been that his RMS is a reflection of his Boston idiolect. From what we have seen in Part III, this is something of an illusion and a trap into which all those who studied his alphabet have fallen, including myself, at least initially when I began this study. We now see that, even after years in London, his own accent remained close to the original New England colonial koine and the following chapters will demonstrate this.

Vaughan’s comments regarding Franklin’s wish to publish a pronouncing dictionary that would assist Americans to pronounced English words in the English manner shows that, as stated above, his linguistic insecurity was quite real but also that his vision of what standard English should be was firmly heteronomous. In Chapters 28 and 29, we shall see that it was this sense of American linguistic subservience that probably enraged Webster (even after the Revolution) and it is not impossible that there may have been bit of friction

between the two men on this point. As I have stated previously, however, I doubt whether Franklin became sympathetic to the idea of an American English model after the Revolution. The reasons for this will be provided in Chapter 29-30 of Part V.

As I indicated in Part I (Chapters 1, 2, 5) and Part II (Chapter 14), Franklin's goal in pushing for an orthographic reform was above all social and economic. By advancing a phonologically-based model of pronunciation he, like Spence a few years later, believed it would allow speakers of the less privileged social classes to acquire a pronunciation which would make them more acceptable to members of the middle and upper classes. In short, they would no longer be "laughed at" and associated with the "dross" (cf. Chapter 14).

Through reading and writing, they would simultaneously improve their level of education and the quality of their speech. This, in turn, would automatically improve their social and economic station in life and, thereafter, they could deal as equals with the aristocratic classes. This objective was expressed very clearly in his *Autobiography* and was one of the main reasons he championed the first public lending library. Coming from a family of Protestant dissenters, but inspired by Enlightenment ideas, Franklin believed that furnishing the necessary pedagogical tools to the labouring classes would allow them, at a secular level, to break the chains that bound them within the rigid social hierarchy of the time.

3.6 A Second Discovery: Polly Stevenson's September 26, 1768 Manuscript Response

While searching through the online archives of the American Philosophical Society (Franklin, 1768b), I came across a second manuscript letter, what appears to be Polly Stevenson's original draft response to Franklin's July 20th letter. Given the messy appearance of the letter, she was obviously struggling to apply the RMS alphabet. Nevertheless, despite the seal on the letter with Franklin's address, I have difficulty imagining that she would have allowed herself to send him such a sloppy version of it (cf. Appendix 2). In addition, if she had posted it to him, why would it have been preserved among her papers? Would he have sent it back to her? This seems unlikely. However, what is perplexing is that, in some respects, it offers a more accurate transcription than the one published by Vaughan eleven years later (cf. Franklin, 1779, 472, Appendix 1). Were the transcription errors introduced inadvertently by Vaughan or had Stevenson sent another version to Franklin with slight, but erroneous, innovations? Note that in the following transcriptions I have interpreted her pronunciation of *y* as [Λ], not [ʁ].

Fig. 25.4 Variant transcriptions of Stevenson's letter: 1768-1779.

Stevenson's Sept 26, 1768 draft letter to BF		Vaughan's 1779 edition, p. 472; for more discussion cf. Chapter 26, <ii> vs <i>, RMS	
<i>idifʏns</i>	[idɪfənʃ]	<i>iidifʏns</i>	[i:'dɪfənʃ]
<i>isiest</i>	[ɪʃiɛst]	<i>iisiest</i>	[i:ʃiɛst]
<i>inkaənviɪniens</i>	[ɪnkən'vi(:)niens]	<i>inkaənviiniens</i>	[ɪnkə(:)n'vi:niens]
<i>pipil</i>	[pi(:)pɪl ~ pi:pɪ]	<i>piipil</i>	[pi(:)pɪl ~ pi:pɪ]
<i>difikultis</i>	[ˈdɪfɪkʌltɪʃ]	<i>difikultis</i>	[ˈdɪfɪkʌltɪʃ]
<i>ɑɑrselvʌs</i>	[ɒuɹ'selvʃ]	<i>ɑɑrselves</i>	[ɒuɹ'selvʃ]
<i>fɪks'd</i>	[fɪkst]	<i>fixs'd</i>	[fɪkst]
<i>tu</i>	[tu]	<i>ta</i>	[ta] (for unstressed [tə]?)
<i>kaəmʏn</i>	[ˈkəmən]	<i>kaəmin</i>	[ˈkəmɪn]

NB: In her draft letter, Stevenson underlines ui “we” for emphasis in the phrase *ʏnles ui liviŋ rʏitʏrs pʏblɪf nu idifʏns* “unless we living writers publish new editions.” This may be an allusion to the fact that he was a printer and would have stood to make a lot of money in such an endeavour!

3.7 Interpreting the Contents of the Three Letters

Taken collectively, the three letters provide not only precious information about the motivations and reservations of the two correspondents, but also a learning curve in the use of the new alphabet (cf. Chapter 27). Franklin's error-filled first draft was sent to Polly on July 20. In two months' time, she had already mastered his alphabet, making far fewer “mistakes” than Franklin did himself in his own first attempt (unless she had made several drafts in the meantime). Hers is also a fair representation of the pronunciation which Franklin obviously judged to be typical of educated London English and which he appears to be imitating. His third and final letter offers a transcription which, despite a number of errors due to lapses of concentration, is far superior to his first attempt and very close to Polly's in terms of pronunciation and quality of expression. Was this thanks to her counsel?

Nevertheless, as all linguists who have studied Franklin's treatise have concluded (as well as his editor, Vaughan, 1779), his treatise was far from finished and it is obvious that, had he had more time to dedicate himself to his reform, he would have done so with far more diligence. Nevertheless, many of the initial inconsistencies observed in his first letter were eliminated but a number of problematic transcriptions of words still remained. It is these irregularities that will attract our attention in the coming chapters.

3.8 Franklin's Arguments in Support of an Orthographic Reform

Franklin's arguments in favour of his orthographic reform are expressed in his two letters to Polly Stevenson and should be considered in conjunction with remarks he makes in his RMS. His counter arguments to Stevenson's criticisms can be summarized as follows.

Polly Stevenson states that the reform "will be attended with inconveniences and difficulties" of which she indicates three principal kinds (and one of which Franklin does not address in his response). The first point she makes is perhaps the most obvious from a linguistic perspective and concerns her doubts that a single English model of pronunciation could be imposed or, as she expresses it, "fixed." We have already discussed this point above. Perhaps on account of the comparatively levelled koines spoken in America, Franklin seems oblivious to this point.

The second inconvenience she identifies is that, because all words would be spelt in phonetic script, the old orthographic traditions would be abandoned, the consequence being that the etymologies would be lost and the meanings of words could not be "ascertained." Franklin brushes this argument aside stating that "Etymologies are at present very uncertain; but such as they are, the old books would still preserve them, and etymologists would there find them." He then adds that the meanings of words change with time so that "knave" and "villain," which were insults in Franklin's day, originally merely meant a "lad or servant" on one hand, and "an underploughman, or the inhabitant of a village" on the other.

The third point she makes is that homonyms, which are spelt differently in traditional English spelling, would henceforth be indistinguishable and thus cause confusion as to their meaning. She puts it this way: "the distinction, too, between words of different meaning and similar sound would be useless, *unless we living writers publish new editions.*" The phrase in italics above may in fact allude to her fear that all English books published in the traditional orthography would need to be reprinted using Franklin's modified spelling. Indeed, this may have originally been one of Franklin's motivations since, as a printer, he would have stood to make a fortune undertaking such a task.

Franklin offers the following counterargument: "The distinction is already destroyed" when these homonyms are pronounced in natural conversation. He adds that their meanings are immediately understood through the context in which they are used, even in the "rapidity of discourse." He then stresses how much easier it would be to interpret their meanings in a "written sentence" which "may be read leisurely."

At this point we encounter a snag. Franklin distorts her "third inconvenience" quoting Stevenson as stating that '*all the books already written would be useless*'"

(my italics), where she actually writes that “the distinction, too, between words of different meaning and similar sound would be useless, *unless we living writers publish new editions.*” Unless she wrote another letter to Franklin that has since been lost, it is patently clear that the sentence he cites does not appear in her September 26th letter or anywhere else to my knowledge.

It is not improbable, however, that this misquote may have come from oral discussions they may have had on the subject previous to the writing of these letters or simply that he was recalling her letter from memory.

3.9 Language Change and the Need for Orthographic Reform

Franklin was obsessed by the idea that the rapidity of language change, without the accompanying modernization of orthography, would cause a widening of the gulf between the spoken and written language to the extent that would provoke a complete disconnect between the two in the future. In his September 28th letter, he adds another counterargument contending that, just as the Romans formerly spoke and wrote in Latin, the Italians now speak and write in “Italian.” In other words, Italian results from the modernization of Latin orthography. Otherwise, if they had not done so, “a mere unlearned Italian” would have been prohibited from reading. Indirectly, he is making an unspoken allusion to poor uneducated Englishmen and Americans who he believes face similar obstacles resulting from what Franklin viewed as an antiquated English spelling system. To prove his point, he cites the modern Italian word *veskovo* for “bishop” which he points out is written as it is pronounced. If the spelling system had not been altered, Italians would have had to write the older Latin form, *episcopus*, in its place, a pronunciation so distant from modern Italian that “written words would have stood for things.”

Finally, he stresses that, as language continues to evolve, our ability to recognize the link between the spoken and the written word will no longer be possible. Franklin concludes that the time to act is now (i.e. 1768) and that, despite the difficulties of instituting a spelling reform, it would be far easier to do so before the language evolves to a state where it is no longer possible to make the connection between the written and spoken language.

In an interesting twist, and as a case in point, he shifts the discussion to the fate of the Chinese writing system which he incorrectly assumes was originally based on a phonetic alphabet rather than on a system of pictorial characters. He addresses this issue very briefly in his September 28th letter but provides more detail about this idea in his original July 20th letter, which he expresses this way: “our Words will gradually cease to express sounds, they Will only stand for things, as the written words do in the Chinese Language.”

26. The RMS Vocalic System

Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed phonological analysis of Franklin's "Reformed Mode of Spelling." Section 1 begins with a presentation of the three vowel and consonant tables he sent to Polly Stevenson on July 20th, 1768, followed by the ones published in Vaughan's 1779 edition. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, the differences between the two versions are minimal, but there are nevertheless a few important details which will be discussed in the section on *Price* and *Choice* words in Chapter 27.

Section 2 delves more deeply into the theoretical underpinnings of Franklin's vocalic system, while section 3 is composed of detailed presentations and analyses of each of Franklin's seven vowels (ten if we consider the long vowels separately). In this last section, his descriptions for each vowel and consonant of his alphabet are reproduced in his own words as they appear in both the 1768 and 1779 versions of his treatise and reformulated in the context of the analyses.

1. Franklin's Descriptions of his Alphabet

1.1 A Scientific Approach to Language Study

I begin this discussion with a presentation of the vowel and consonant table Franklin sent to Polly Stevenson, presumably on July 20, 1768, along with his initial letter in which he requests her assistance. As mentioned in the introduction to Part IV, these manuscript versions of the consonant and vowel table and the initial correspondence between Franklin and Stevenson are preserved in the archives of the American Philosophical Society. The format Franklin chose for the original 1768 version of this table is significantly different to its presentation in Vaughan's 1779 edition. As I mentioned earlier, in Franklin's 1768 manuscript version, he concentrated all his tables in one coherent ensemble. On the other hand, Vaughan broke them down into three separate tables.

The detailed descriptions of his vowels and consonants in Franklin's 1768 version are classified under "Remarks." These remarks correspond to what I

have identified as Table 1 (Franklin, 1779, 468).¹ Columns 1 and 2 of his 1768 manuscript table (Figure 26.1) correspond to Vaughan's Table 2 (Franklin, 1779, 470b) while columns 3 and 4 match Vaughan's Table 3 (Franklin, 1779, 470a) (see Figure 26.2). See also Appendix 1 to view Vaughan's entire 1779 publication of the RMS and Appendix 2 for a comparative look at both the manuscript version of the 1768 vowel and consonant table and the IPA transcriptions of both the 1768 and 1779 edition correspondence of the RMS. These digitized documents have never been published before.

Given that the format is entirely different from the one found in Vaughan's 1779 edition, one wonders who decided on the presentation in Vaughan's edition. Was it Vaughan, or Franklin himself? I have no answer to this question.² In my view, the coherence of the original format is far greater and is as follows.

Fig. 26.1a Franklin's 1768 vowel and consonant table.

<i>Classes of Letter</i>	<i>Sounded as now as in (Cf. Table 2, Franklin, 1779, 470b)</i>	<i>Names of the letters express'd in the reform'd sounds and characters</i>	<i>(Cf. Table 3, Franklin, 1779, 470a)</i>	<i>Author's comments</i>
<i>o</i>	<i>old</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>The first vowel, naturally, and deepest sound; requires only to open the Mouth, and breathe thro' it.</i>	
<i>α</i>	<i>ball, fall</i> <i>John, Folly</i>	<i>α</i>	<i>The next, requiring the Mouth open'd a little more or hollower.</i>	<i>Fall and ball are both barred; cf. Wallis & Wilkins' minimal pair, fall ~ folly, having the same vowel quality</i>
<i>a</i>	<i>man, can</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>The next, still more</i>	
<i>e</i>	<i>mane, lane</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>The next, requires the Tongue to be a little more elevated tho the Pipe alone will form them, but not so easily.</i>	<i>Examples suggest long [eː ~ εː]</i>

1 The reference librarians at the American Philosophical Society were not able to locate the manuscript copy of the Franklin's "Remarks" or Franklin's September 28th long response to Stevenson, which were normally preserved in the American Philosophical Society's Islandora Repository.

2 My sincere thanks to Ms. Jenny Catri, reference librarian at the Woodburn Public Library, Centerville, Ohio, who was able to locate this document in the American Philosophical Society Archives.

Classes of Letter	Sounded as now as in (Cf. Table 2, Franklin, 1779, 470b)	Names of the letters express'd in the reform'd sounds and characters	(Cf. Table 3, Franklin, 1779, 470a)	Author's comments
<i>i</i>	<i>*een, been</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>The next, still a little more.</i>	Cf. note on "een" below
<i>u</i>	<i>tool, fool</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>The next, requires the Lips to be gather'd up, leaving a small Opening.</i>	Examples suggest long /u:/ here
<i>y</i>	<i>um, un as in umbridge, unto</i>	<i>y</i>	<i>The next, a very short Vowel as in <umbrage>, <unto>, &c</i>	Cf. Vaughan's misinterpretation "unto" as "into" [ɹ ~ ə] vs [Δ]
<i>h</i>	<i>humfrey, happy, hunter, high</i>	<i>huh</i>	<i>a stronger or more forcible Aspiration</i>	The Welsh family name Humphrey is barred
<i>g</i>	<i>give, gather</i>	<i>gi</i>	<i>The first Consonant, being form'd by the Root of the Tongue, this is the present hard g.</i>	
<i>k</i>	<i>keep, kick</i>	<i>ki</i>	<i>a kindred Sound, a little more acute, to be us'd instead of the hard c.</i>	
<i>*f</i>	<i>sh ship, wish</i>	<i>if</i>	<i>A new Letter; wanted in our Language, our sh, separately taken, not being proper Elements of the Sound.</i>	
<i>ŋ</i>	<i>ng reaping, among</i>	<i>ing</i>	<i>A new Letter; wanted for the among same Reason; these are form'd back in the Mouth.</i>	
<i>n</i>	<i>end</i>	<i>2) en</i>	<i>Form'd more forward in the Mouth, the Tip of the Tongue to the Roof of the Mouth.</i>	The inversion of the 2 & 1 are not explained
<i>r</i>	<i>art</i>	<i>1) ar</i>	<i>The same, the Tip of the Tongue a little loose or separate from the Roof of the Mouth.</i>	
<i>t</i>	<i>teeth</i>	<i>ti</i>	<i>The Tip of the Tongue more forward, touching and then leaving the Roof.</i>	
<i>d</i>	<i>deed</i>	<i>di</i>	<i>The same, touching a little fuller.</i>	

Classes of Letter	Sounded as now as in (Cf. Table 2, Franklin, 1779, 470b)	Names of the letters express'd in the reform'd sounds and characters	(Cf. Table 3, Franklin, 1779, 470a)	Author's comments
<i>l</i>	<i>ell tell</i>	<i>el</i>	<i>The same touching just about the Gums of the upper Teeth.</i>	
<i>*θ</i>	<i>th think</i>	<i>eθ</i>	<i>The Tongue under and a little behind the upper Teeth, touching them nearly but so as to let the Breath pass between.</i>	
<i>*ð</i>	<i>dh thy</i>	<i>eð</i>	<i>The same a little fuller.</i>	
<i>s</i>	<i>essence</i>	<i>es</i>	<i>This sound is formed, by the breath passing between the moist end of the tongue and the upper teeth.</i>	
<i>z</i>	<i>ez wages</i>	<i>ez</i>	<i>The same, a little denser and duller.</i>	
<i>f</i>	<i>effect</i>	<i>ef</i>	<i>Form'd by the lower Lip against the upper Teeth.</i>	
<i>v</i>	<i>ever</i>	<i>ev</i>	<i>The same fuller and duller.</i>	
<i>b</i>	<i>Bees</i>	<i>bi</i>	<i>The lips put full together and open'd as the Air passes out.</i>	
<i>p</i>	<i>peep</i>	<i>pi</i>	<i>The same but a thinner Sound.</i>	
<i>m</i>	<i>ember</i>	<i>em</i>	<i>The closing of the Lips, while the e is sounding.</i>	

**s/ and /z/ are presented before /θ/ and /ð/ in this 1768 version. In Vaughan's edition, it is the opposite. Note also that vowel length is not indicated at all here, which suggests to me that he had not quite come to a firm conclusion about how to distinguish between short and long vowels. Another important detail is that, in his description of /r/ above, he does state that the tongue is "vibrating." This detail was added to Table 3 (p. 470b) of Vaughan's 1779 edition.*

In many ways, the 1768 version is more practical in that it presents a far more synthetic vision of the entire system and the connection between the different vowels and consonants. Had he been able to include the "Remarks" in the 5th and 6th columns, the system would have been even clearer for the neophyte.

Fig. 26.1b Franklin's 1768 vowel and consonant table (continued) (corresponds to Table 1 of Vaughan's 1779 edition below).

Remarks	
o to huh	It is endeavoured to give the Alphabet a more natural Order, beginning first with the simple Sounds form'd by the Breath, with none or very little Help of Tongue, Teeth and Lips, and produc'd chiefly in the Windpipe;
ish f ing ŋ	Then coming forward to those form'd by the Root of the Tongue next to the Windpipe; gi³ ki
r n t d	Then to those form'd more forward by the forepart of the Tongue against the Roof of the Mouth;
es ez el	Then those form's still more forward in the Mouth, by the Tip of the Tongue, apply'd first to the Roots of the upper Teeth;
eth, θ	Then to the Ends or Edges of the same Teeth; edh dh (i.e. IPA /ð/ ;
ef ev	Then to those form'd still more forward by the under Lip apply'd to the upper Teeth;
bi pi	Then to those form'd yet more forward by the upper and under Lip opening to let out the sounding; Breath;
m	And lastly ending with the Shutting up of the Mouth or closing the Lips, while any Vowel is sounding.
In this Alphabet c is omitted as unnecessary, k supplying its hard Sound and s the soft.	
The Jod j is also omitted, its Sound being supplied by the new Letter ish *j, which serves other purposes, assisting in the formation of other Sounds; thus the j with a d before it gives the Sound of the Jod j and soft g, as in James, January, Giant, gentle, <i>djeems</i> , <i>djanueri</i> , <i>dfyant</i> , <i>dfentel</i> ; with a t before it, it gives the Sound of ch soft, as in cherry, chip, <i>tjeri</i> , <i>tjip</i> ; and with an z before it the French sound of the Jod j, as in jamais, <i>zjame</i> .	
Thus, the g has no longer two different Sounds, which occasion'd Confusion, but is as every Letter ought to be, confin'd to one; the same is to be observ'd in all the Letters, Vowels and Consonants, that wherever they are met with, or in whatever Company, their Sound is always the same. It is also intended that there be no superfluous Letters used in Spelling, i.e. no Letter that is not sounded, and this Alphabet by Six new Letters provides that there be no distinct Sounds in the Language without Letters to express them. As to the Difference between short and long Vowels, it is naturally express'd by a single Vowel where short, a double one where long; as, for <i>mend</i> write <i>mend</i> , but for <i>remain'd</i> write <i>rime en'd</i> ; for <i>did</i> , write <i>did</i> , but for <i>deed</i> , write <i>diid</i> , &c.	
this to be altered ⁴	What in our common Alphabet is suppos'd the third Vowel, i, as we sound it is not a Vowel but a Diphthong, consisting of two of our Vowels join'd, viz. a as sounded to be in <i>all</i> or u as sounded in <i>unto</i> and e; any one will be senaltered sible [sic] of this, who sounds those two Vowels ae or ue quick after each other; the Sound begins <i>aw</i> or <i>y</i> and ends <i>ee</i> . The true Sound of the i is that we now give to e in the words <i>deed</i> , <i>keep</i> , &c. [Remainder missing.]

3 In his remarks, he fails to provide a description for <gi> and <ki>. One is included in Vaughan's edition. However, in this 1768 manuscript, he includes a description of <ish> and <ing> which, in turn, is absent from Vaughan's version of the text.

4 This is Franklin's note in the margin to Polly.

Summary: We see here that Franklin discards the following letters from his alphabet: the letter C, which he replaces with <k> or <s>, J, replaced by the affricate <dʃ> or his erroneous <zʃ>, Q, replaced by <ku> (i.e. [ku] not [kju:]), W, replaced by <u>, X, replaced by <ks> and Y, replaced by <i>... In this way he eliminates superfluous letters. Note here that his <ku> [ku] is not palatalized (cf. Chapter 23 and Chapter 27).

NB: We shall see below that Polly Stevenson transcribes “fix’d” in two different ways. In the September 26, 1768 letter she sent to Franklin, she spells it *fixs’d*. However, in Vaughan’s 1779 edition, he has her spell it *fix’d*. The first is closer to the mark of course.

1.2 Vaughan’s 1779 edition

As we see in his Table 1 (Figure 26.1b above), Franklin gets right to the point from the outset by expressing his intention to present the alphabet in a “more natural order” I interpret this to mean in a “more scientific manner” and, more specifically, by using an approach akin to that of modern articulatory phonetics. As we shall see, he attempts to systematically define each phone or sound according to the manner in which it is pronounced, for instance, by indicating the precise height of the tongue and position of the sound in the buccal cavity. Here there can be little doubt that he is following a much older orthoepistic tradition established by Smith, Wallis and Wilkins, who were among the first to develop a phonetic nomenclature which enabled them to provide phonetic descriptions of each vowel and consonant in a scientific way. Wilkins, for instance, employed detailed drawings of the vocal apparatus to demonstrate each sound. In the third and fourth columns of Figure 26.2 below, I have indicated the modern phonetic descriptions and the IPA equivalents as I have understood them.

As explained in the introduction, the data in Figure 26.2 (Franklin’s Table 1), correspond almost exactly to the information outlined under the heading “Remarks” in the 1768 version. For comparison, see Appendix 1 to view the original digital copy of Vaughan’s edition of Franklin’s RMS and his original manuscript vowel and consonant table in Appendix 2.

In the far righthand column, I propose the precise IPA values that Franklin is most likely to have intended for each of his twenty-six characters. As explained in Chapter 25, I have introduced three IPA characters to reproduce Franklin’s original “h-looking” symbols which I was unable to reproduce here, namely, [θ], [ð] and [ʃ]. I have also included [ʃ] as the second element of his affricates [tʃ] and [dʃ] (i.e. IPA /dʒ/) as well as his “French” [zʃ] sound (i.e. IPA /ʒ/) which he incorrectly perceives to be an affricate.

For the velar nasal, Franklin uses the same Greek character that was later adopted by the IPA, /ŋ/. As I mentioned previously, these four consonants have

been stable in the English language for centuries and, for our purposes, they are unremarkable. For easier recognition and to avoid potential confusion, all of Franklin's transcribed words are presented in bold, italicized characters.

Only two vowels pose potential problems in terms of interpreting their precise quality and quantity, namely **ʏ** and **aa**. For reasons explained in Chapters 16 and 25, I feel confident that Franklin's native realization of **ʏ** was [ʏ ~ ʏ̥] when stressed and [ə] when unstressed, while Stevenson's realization of it may have been innovative London [ʌ] when stressed. Given that he sought to model his RMS in London English, I have attributed /ʌ/ as its phonemic value for his **ʏ** character. On the other hand, Franklin's and Stevenson's **aa** was almost certainly [ɒ(:)] with a possible [ɑ(:)] variable. In other words, I am not entirely convinced the two variables were phonemic for him.

Furthermore, sociolinguistically, nearly all these words were intended to be pronounced in a careful, disparitary style. On occasion, however, Franklin forgets himself and, occasionally, a paritary New England feature will slip through the net. These will be identified and discussed individually in Chapter 28.

Fig. 26.2 Franklin's Table 1 (1779, 468).

Franklin's Alphabet	Franklin's descriptions	Modern phonetic descriptions	IPA equivalents
o	1768/1779: It is endeavoured to give the alphabet a <i>more natural order</i> ;	A back mid lax rounded vowel	/ɔ/
to	Beginning first with the simple sounds formed by the breath, with none or very little help of the tongue, teeth, and lips; and produced chiefly in the windpipe.		
ʏ		An open mid lax unrounded vowel	/ʏ/ Franklin /ʌ/ London
k, g	1779: Then coming to those formed by the roof of the tongue next to the windpipe.	A voiceless and voiced velar occlusive	/k/, /g/
ki, gi	1768: no description here (cf. below)		
r, n	1768/1779: Then to those, formed more forward, by the forepart of the tongue against the roof of the mouth.	An apico-alveolar flap or trill (?) (see discussion below)	/r/
t, d		A voiced apico-alveolar nasal	/n/
		Voiceless and voiced apico-alveolar occlusives	/t/, /d/
l	1768/1779: Then those, formed still more forward, in the mouth, by the tip of the tongue applied first to the roots of the upper teeth.	A voiced apico-alveolar lateral and voiceless and voiced apico-alveolar fricatives	/l/
s, z			/s/, /z/
es, ez, el		* The 1768 version presents them as es , ez , el respectively	

Franklin's Alphabet	Franklin's descriptions	Modern phonetic descriptions	IPA equivalents
*θ, ð eth, edh	1779: Then to those, formed by the tip of the tongue applied to the ends or edges of the upper teeth. 1768: Then to the Ends or Edges of the same Teeth; } edh dh	Voiceless and voiced interdental fricatives	/θ/, /ð/
f, v ef, ev	1768/1779: Then to those, formed still more foreward by the under lip applied to the upper teeth.	Voiceless and voiced labiodental fricatives	/f/, /v/
p, b bi, pi	1768/1779: Then to those, formed yet more forward by the upper and under lip opening to let out the sounding breath.	Voiceless and voiced bilabial occlusives	/p/, /b/
m em	1768/1779: And lastly, ending with the shutting up of the mouth, or closing the lips while any vowel is sounding.	A voiced bilabial nasal	/m/

The only bizarre twist with regard to Vaughan's 1779 publication is that the version sent to Stevenson on July 20, 1768, includes a description of *ish/in*, which he placed directly after his description of the vowels "o to u." These consonants were obviously misplaced and do not reappear here in Table 1 of Vaughan's edition. On the other hand, the 1768 version, however, lacks descriptions for *gi/ki* which are present in the 1779 edition. The description of <h> is also missing from Table 1 of the 1779 publication.

Significantly, in the 1768 description of *ish/in*, Franklin writes: "Then coming forward to those *form'd by the Root of the Tongue next to the Windpipe*." Here, Franklin interprets <ish> and <in> as being mixed palato-velar consonants of the same type. Although inaccurate, this description explains the logic of his presentation of the consonants in Chapter 27 (i.e. /g/, /k/, /ʃ/, /ŋ/... below).

The following table is somewhat repetitive with, once again, another presentation of Franklin's symbols or "characters." Here, the novelty is that he provides key words to illustrate the sound some of which constitute minimal pairs.

Fig. 26.3 Franklin's Table 2 (1779, 470a).

p. 470b	Franklin's descriptions	Modern phonetic descriptions	IPA equivalents
Character	Sounded [respectively] as in the words in the column below		
o	1768/1779: old	A back true mid rounded vowel of variable length	/ɔ(:)/

p. 470b	Franklin's descriptions	Modern phonetic descriptions	IPA equivalents
aa	1779: John, folly; awl, ball 1768: John, Folly	An open, back unrounded vowel of variable length	/ɒ(:)/ [ɒ(:)] ~ [ɑ(:)]
a	1768/1779: man, can	An open, lax, front vowel	/æ/
e	1779: men, lend; name, lane 1768: mane, lane	A mid, lax front vowel	/ɛ(:)/
i	1779: did, sin, deed, seen 1768: een, ⁵ seen	A close, lax or tense, front vowel	/i(:)/
u	1779: tool, fool, rule 1768: tool, fool	A close tense, back vowel	/u(:)/
ʉ	1779: um, un; as in umbrage, unto & as in er 1768: um, un, as in umbrage, unto, &c.	A low, central vowel	London: /ʌ/ Franklin: [ʏ~ʏ~ʊ~ə]
h	1768/1779: hunter, happy, high	A voiceless glottal fricative	/h/
g	1768/1779: give, gather	A voiced, velar occlusive	/g/
k	1768/1779: keep, kick	A voiceless, velar occlusive	/k/
*f	1768/1779: (sh) ship, wish	A voiceless, palato-alveolar fricative	/ʃ/
ŋ	1779: (ng) ing, repeating, among 1768: ng, ing, reaping, among	A voiced velar nasal	/ŋ/
n	1768/1779: end	A voiced alveolar nasal	/n/
r	1768/1779: art	A voiced retroflex/approximant	/r/
t	1768/1779: teeth	A voiceless alveolar occlusive	/t/
d	1768/1779: deed	A voiced alveolar occlusive	/d/
l	1768/1779: ell, ⁶ tell	A voiced, alveolar lateral	/l/
s	1768/1779: essence	A voiceless alveolar fricative	/s/
z	1779: wages 1768: ez, wages	A voiced alveolar fricative	/z/
*θ	1768/1779: (th) think	A voiceless dental fricative	/θ/
*ð	1768/1779: (dh) thy	A voiced dental fricative	/ð/

5 *Een* is a variant of “eyes” and is one of the rare examples of -en plurals (now irregular) that Franklin used naturally. It survives only in English dialects today showing that this form (along with *housen* and *birchen*, etc.) were still heard in North America (cf. Wakelyn (1988) and Viereck (1985), Chapters 11 and 12).

6 This refers to the name he gives to the letter /l/. In the 1768 table he sent to Stevenson in 1768, he only spells it with one <l>.

p. 470b	Franklin’s descriptions	Modern phonetic descriptions	IPA equivalents
<i>f</i>	1768/1779: effect	A voiceless, labiodental fricative	/f/
<i>v</i>	1768/1779: ever	A voiced labiodental fricative	/v/
<i>b</i>	1768/1779: bees	A voiced bilabial occlusive	/b/
<i>p</i>	1768/1779: peep	A voiceless bilabial occlusive	/p/
<i>m</i>	1768/1779: ember	A voiced bilabial nasal	/m/

Comments: New characters were cut by Alvin Eisenman (Monotype Corporation Ltd) for Willcox’s 1972 edition of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*. Eisenman describes this <*aa*> as a “Siamese a.” I have not used his modified characters as a model in this book because they are so distant from Franklin’s that they distort the overall aesthetic impression of his alphabet, of which, as Abercrombie (1981, 210) remarked, “the total effect is very pleasing.” Franklin’s character for <*η*> is nearly the equivalent of IPA /ɨ/, being a ligature of <*n*> + <*g*>; <*υ*> is represented by Angus (1935), Wise (1948) and all other linguists as /ʌ/ (/ə/ by Malone (cf. Willcox et al., 1972; Franklin, 1768c). However, they all assume this /ʌ/ reflects his native Boston accent.

Note also that his “French” sound “*zʃ*” [ʒ] does not figure in this table, nor do his affricates *tf* [tʃ] and *df* [dʒ], because he considered it to be a consonant cluster. <Hw- > [hu] also figures in this category. Note too that [w] and [j], the latter because they are considered vowels /u/ and /i/.

On p. 470b, Franklin presents his proto-phonemes in detail under two headings: “Names of letters as expressed in the reformed sounds and characters” and, for his descriptions of them, “Manner of pronouncing the sounds.” Notice that he gives no long equivalents for any of these vowels, front or back, just as in the 1768 original. I have also inserted the 1768 descriptions here for comparison when they are identical.

Fig. 26.4 Franklin’s Table 3 (1779, 470b).

Names of letters as expressed in the reformed sounds and characters	Manner of pronouncing the sounds	Interpretations of Franklin’s phonetic
<i>o</i>	1768/1779: “The first Vowel naturally, and deepest sound; requires only to open the Mouth, and breathe thro’ it.”	/ɔ/: “deepest” = a back mid vowel; “open the mouth” = rounded
<i>aa</i>	1768/1779: “The next, requiring the Mouth open’d a little more or hollower.”	/ɒ/: “the mouth opened” = the vowel is lower; “hollower” = slightly less rounded
<i>α</i>	1768/1779: “The next, still more”	/æ/ fronted, low, unrounded + [a] allophone

Names of letters as expressed in the reformed sounds and characters	Manner of pronouncing the sounds	Interpretations of Franklin's phonetic
e	1768/1779: "The next, requires the Tongue to be a little more elevated tho the Pipe alone will form them, but not so easily."	/ɛ(:)/: a mid front vowel
i	1768/1779: "The next, still a little more."	/i(:)/: a high front vowel
u	1768/1779: "The next, requires the Lips to be gather'd up, leaving a small Opening."	/u/: a high back rounded vowel (see Table 2 for his key words: <i>tool</i> , <i>fool</i> , <i>rule</i> suggesting long [u:]). The tenseness of this vowel is suggested by the "lips being "gather'd up, leaving a <i>small Opening</i> " as opposed to "lax" [ʊ ~ ʊ̹].
ʊ	1768/1779: "The next, a very short Vowel as in <umbrage>, <unto>, &c. the Sound of which we should express in our present Letters thus, <i>uh</i> , a short and not very strong Aspiration."	/ʌ/ (or [ə] when unstressed): /ʌ/ was almost certainly the London model at this time. Just like most English northerners today, I doubt Franklin was ever able to master this [ʌ] pronunciation. Franklin's [ʊ ~ ʊ̹] was a slightly centralized vowel just below [ʊ] and above [ʏ] ⁷
huh	1768/1779: "a stronger or more forcible Aspiration [sic]," spelt "Aspiration" in the 1768 document.	[hə]: "/h/ is the name of the sound we normally pronounce '(h)aitch'"
gi	1768/1779: "The first Consonant, being form'd by the Root of the Tongue, this is the present hard g."	[gi]: /g/
ki	1768/1779: "a kindred Sound, a little more acute, to be us'd instead of the hard c."	[ki]: /k/ "more acute" = unvoiced velar
ish	1768/1779: "A new Letter, wanted in our Language, our sh, separately taken, not being proper Elements of the Sound."	[i(:)ʃ]: /ʃ/ voiceless palato-dorsal fricative See the definition he gives for [ɪʃ] and [iŋ] in Table 1: 1768: "Then coming forward to those <i>form'd by the Root of the Tongue next to the Windpipe</i> "

7 Recall that in New England, <u> and "uh" were still [ʊ̹] at this time, not Polly Stevenson's /ʌ/. Given that I believe his scheme was based on London English, I perhaps should have considered the phoneme to be /ʌ/ with allophones in [ʌ ~ ʊ̹ ~ ʏ]. In his natural speech it was almost certainly [ʊ̹ ~ ʏ], for reasons explained in Part III.

Names of letters as expressed in the reformed sounds and characters	Manner of pronouncing the sounds	Interpretations of Franklin's phonetic
ing	1768/1779: "A new Letter, wanted for the among same Reason; these are form'd back in the Mouth."	[ɪŋ]: /ŋ/ a velar nasal (not included in the descriptions of Table 1, 1779, but see the 1768 description just above)
en	1768/1779: "Form'd more forward in the Mouth, the Tip of the Tongue to the Roof of the Mouth."	[ɛn]: /n/ apico-alveolar nasal
r ar	1779: "The same, the Tip of the Tongue a little loose or separate from the Roof of the Mouth <i>and vibrating</i> ." 1768: "The same, the Tip of the Tongue a little loose or separate from the Roof of the Mouth."	[æɹ]: Note that Sheridan pronounces /r/ <er> [ɛɹ] (cf. below); /r/ is most likely an apico-alveolar approximant or retroflex (probably in post-vocalic position & possibly also when initial, rather than a trill); "Art" is the key word given in Table 2. Contrast this with his description of /r/ as an apico-alveolar trill or flap in Table 1 (along with /t/, /d/, /n/). (see discussion below)
ti	1768/1779: "The Tip of the Tongue more forward, touching and then leaving the Roof."	[ti]: /t/ voiceless apico-alveolar occlusive
di	1768/1779: "The same, touching a little fuller."	[di]: /d/ "the same, touching a little fuller" = voiced
el	1768/1779: "The same touching just about the Gums of the upper Teeth."	[ɛl]: /l/ "the same" = apico-alveolar liquid
es	1768/1779: "This sound is formed, by the breath passing between the moist end of the tongue and the upper teeth."	[ɛs]: /s/ "the breath passing between the moist end of the tongue and the upper teeth" = (voiceless) alveolar fricative
ez	1768/1779: "The same, a little denser and duller."	[ɛz]: /z/ "denser and duller" = voiced (cf. fuller above)
*eθ	1768/1779: "The Tongue under and a little behind the upper Teeth, touching them nearly but so as to let the Breath pass between."	[ɛθ]: /θ/ a (voiceless) dental fricative
*eð	1768/1779: "The same a little fuller."	[ɛð]: /ð/ "the same a little fuller" = voiced i.e. a voiced dental fricative
ef	1768/1779: "Form'd by the lower Lip against the upper Teeth."	[ɛf]: /f/ a (voiceless) labio-dental fricative

Names of letters as expressed in the reformed sounds and characters	Manner of pronouncing the sounds	Interpretations of Franklin's phonetic
ev	1768/1779: "The same fuller and duller."	[ɛv]: /v/ "the same fuller and duller" = voiced i.e. a voiced labiodental fricative
bi	1768/1779: "The lips put full together and open'd as the Air passes out."	[bi]: /b/ "lips put together" = (voiced) bilabial occlusive
pi	1768/1779: "The same but a thinner Sound."	[pi]: /p/ "thinner" = voiceless bilabial occlusive
em	1768/1779: "The closing of the Lips, while the e is sounding."	[ɛm]: /m/ "closing the lips" = bilabial nasal...

The following table displays Franklin's alphabet in order of presentation: vowels and consonants and their pronunciations

Characters	o	aa	a	ε	i	u	υ
Pronunciation	/ɔ(:)/	/ɒ(:)/	/æ/	/ɛ(:)/	/i(:)/	/u(:)/	/ʌ/ [ʊ~ʏ~ʏ~ʌ]

Characters	h	g	k	*f	η	n	r	t	d
Pronunciation	/hʌ ~ hə]	/gi/	/ki/	/iʃ/	iŋ	ɛn	/æɪ/	/ti/	/di/

Characters	l	s	z	*θ	*ð	f	v	p	b	m
Pronunciation	/ɛl/	/ɛs/	/ɛz/	/ɛθ/	/ɛð/	/ɛf/	/ɛv/	/pi/	/bi/	/ɛm/

* This asterisk indicates Franklin's invented h-like characters that I was unable to reproduce. I have replaced these with IPA equivalents.

The quasi-identical nature of the three 1768 tables Franklin sent to Polly Stevenson are very similar to the copies Vaughan had at his disposal for his 1779 edition, showing that the modifications were minor in the eleven-year lapse between the conception of the alphabet and its publication. As mentioned previously, it proves that Franklin was not influenced by any contemporary English orthoepists who published after 1768, nor have I found evidence suggesting that any of the latter had access to his manuscript during the intervening years. Given the degenerating political climate between 1768-1779, these linguistic changes seem unlikely. The exception was Sir William Jones, a friend and close associate of Franklin's, with whom he very likely discussed his scheme in the course of their bi-monthly meetings and discussions in London until 1775 (cf. Chapter 29).

2. Franklin's Vocalic System

Franklin includes seven vowel characters in his phoneme inventory. His main concern in describing them is primarily qualitative. His discussions of vowel length concern only the front high vowel /i:/ (which he transcribes as <i*i*>) and front low-mid /ɛ:/, which he presents as <ee> or <ê>. Vowel length is indicated for <a*a*> through doubling on one occasion but not systematically. I shall propose the possibility that the fused nature of the character was perhaps intended to be long but his choice of *folly* ~ *ball* as a minimal pair would seem to contradict this.

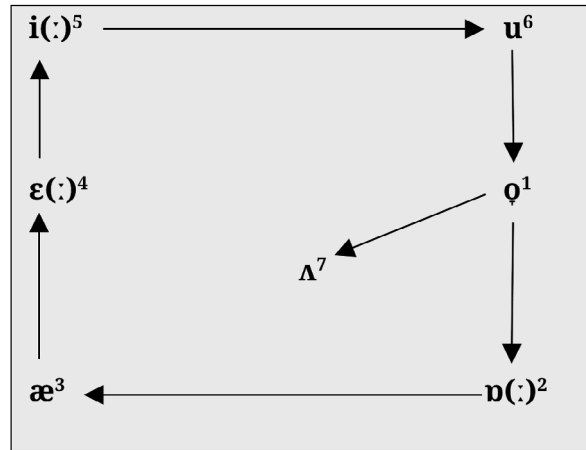
When comparing the original 1768 table with the 1779, the pairing appears to have been done haphazardly (by Vaughan?) and, although for some unknown reason Franklin barred the key words *ball* and *fall* in the 1768 manuscript version of his three tables, he could just as well as indicated *folly* ~ *fall*, just as Wallis and Wilkins did (as opposed to Franklin's *folly* ~ *ball*). I have proposed elsewhere that he hesitated between *folly* ~ *fall* and *folly* ~ *ball* because he was working from memory and obviously could not quite recall Wallis' and Wilkins' minimal pair. "Awl" was added in the 1779 edition and is the same example provided by Kenrick in his 1773 edition of his *A New Dictionary of the English Language*.

Franklin begins Table 1 (p. 468) by stating "It is endeavoured to give the alphabet a *more natural order*." By a "natural order," he is referring here to the general presentation of both vowels and consonants. A closer look at this first table shows that his scheme is based on a solid understanding of vowel apertures, high, mid and low vowels, as well as the concept of front, mid and back vowels, although he does not overtly present his descriptions in this way.

Unlike modern phoneticians, he starts his presentation of the vocalic system with <o> /ɔ(:)/. With regard to consonants, he appears to be reasoning in terms of articulations beginning at the back of the vocal tract and obviously considers /ɔ(:)/ to be of a similar nature. From /ɔ(:)/ he moves downward to open/low back vowels <a*a*> /ɒ(:)/ [ɒ(:) ~ ɑ(:)] and then moves forward towards low front vowels <a> /æ(:)/. He then heads upward towards mid front vowels <e(e)> /ɛ:/ [ɛ(:) ~ ɛ(:)] (contrasting with short /ɛ/) and then to high <i(i)> /i(:)/ (i.e. contrasting with short tense /i/ [i ~ ɪ]) and he moves on to high back <u> /u(:)/. He culminates this circular, clockwise presentation with his <u> character, which most linguists who have studied his RMS have interpreted as a centralized vowel in the area of /ʌ/ or perhaps /ə/ as Malone suggested (Malone, 1925, 96). We have seen previously (Chapters 16, 21, 22) that Franklin's natural Boston pronunciation of this vowel was in the vicinity of [ɤ ~ ɤ̞] particularly in words affected by "New England short o" and "short u." As I explained above, because his proto-phonemic model is not based on his Massachusetts pronunciation, and on what he believed to be cultivated London English, I have given this phoneme the value of /ʌ/ while in

New England it would have had the value of phonemic /ʌ/. The degree to which there was certainly some spillover into his RMS from his Boston idiolect will be considered in Chapter 28.

Fig. 26.5 Franklin's RMS vocalic system.



*The numbers in superscript represent the order of presentation in his tables (1768/1779)

What I find striking here is the logical order of presentation of his vocalic system, showing that he had a clear understanding of articulatory phonetics that was well ahead of his time. We shall come back to the scientific nature of his presentation of the vowel and consonant inventories in the conclusion to Chapter 27.

For the time being, I shall accept this relatively basic “phoneme” inventory at face value and interpret each vowel as literally as possible in the analyses below. The reason for this approach is to avoid inadvertently distorting his scheme. Curiously, he describes the vowels as being pronounced “with none or very little help of the tongue, teeth, and lips.” Taken literally, this would imply that there are no rounded vowels and that the position of the tongue does not modify their nature (high nor low) or their front, central or back equivalents. This stands in complete contradiction to the descriptions he provides for each vowel and, we can be reasonably certain that this is not what he meant. In fact, his comment should thus be understood in the broad sense, that is, when describing vowels, as opposed to consonants, which he believed to require a more vigorous use of the speech organs. He then goes on to present a remarkably well-structured demonstration of the consonant system which shall be discussed in more detail in Chapter 27. The treatment of vowels in unstressed syllables will be discussed at the same time as syllabic consonants.

2.1 The Treatment of Vowels in Stressed and Unstressed Words and Syllables

I would like to pause a moment here to explain why Franklin does his best to transcribe unstressed vowels under their “full” forms. A series of clues are provided in Franklin’s long letter of reprimand to the trustees of his Philadelphia Academy (the future University of Pennsylvania) in June 1789, entitled “Observations Relative to the Intentions of the Original Founders of the Academy in Philadelphia.” In this letter, he criticized them for not having provided sufficient resources to support his plan to establish an “English School,” the purpose of which was to teach the English language as an official, academic subject alongside Latin and Greek (cf. Chapter 5 and Chapter 14). He reminded them in no uncertain terms that this was one of the original conditions to which they had all initially agreed. Quoting the minutes of prior meetings, he stressed the need for students to acquire a “correct” pronunciation and proper grammar. Although he did not define what he meant by this, he referred to an English master named Mr. Dove who fit the bill and who had taught English for sixteen years at Cirencester in England. This suggests that both Franklin and the trustees had an idea of what a “correct” pronunciation resembled and, given the difficulty of finding suitable instructors, one can assume that this ideal accent was not particularly common in Philadelphia. At this time, the Pennsylvania koine had a strong West Midlands component of the kind reflected in Shorrocks’ Lancashire phonology to which I regularly resorted in Part III.

The point here is that, in these same letters to the trustees of the Philadelphia Academy, Franklin presents elements of pedagogical framework in which *students should be obliged to read aloud in the presence of a qualified teacher whose duty it would be to rectify their accents, errors of enunciation and instruct them on how to modulate their voices and adopt proper intonations in order to improve their fluency and style.*

I believe that Franklin designed his RMS with this specific idea in mind and he hoped to provide a pedagogical tool that would assist not only children, but also the uneducated and foreigners to learn to read and write far more quickly and also, thanks to his proto-phonemic system, to pronounce words “correctly.” William Angus (1935, 61) writes “It seems that Franklin tends to give his care to the individual word, to write the pronunciation of each as it would be spoken separately and alone.” Angus is right and, just as he had stated in the aforementioned letters to the trustees, Franklin intended words to be pronounced aloud clearly, slowly and syllabically.

The effect, however, must have been quite unnatural, resulting in the lack of distinction between stressed and unstressed syllables. The same is true of sentence stress. For instance, conjunctions and prepositions which are nearly

always unstressed and reduced in natural connected speech, are given under their full forms in the RMS, for instance, the conjunction **and** [ænd], the indefinite article **e** [ɛ:] “a,” the definite article **ði** [ði] “the” (sixty-four examples), and **aav** [ɒv] “of” (twenty-six examples), **to** or **tu** “to,” etc.

Never once are any of these, except “to,” presented under their reduced forms: ***ynd** [ænd] for “and,” ***ðy** [ðə] for “the” or ***yv** [əv] for “of,” ***y** [ə] for “a.” However, Franklin gives a single example of “to” spelt **ty** [tə] and Stevenson writes it once as **ta** [ta] in Vaughan’s edition in the phrase **hu uif ta akuɣir...** “who wish to acquire.” This is presumably pronounced [ta] and not [tæ]. These are undoubtedly slips but also highly significant ones, in that they provide us with brief glimpses of the reality of their natural pronunciation. On the face of it, this appears to be an obvious reversion to natural informal spoken English.

However, in the 1768 manuscript version of this same letter that is preserved in the American Philosophical Society’s archives, Stevenson clearly writes **tu** and not **ta**. Given the number of differences in transcription between the two versions of her letter, the most credible hypothesis is that Vaughan had another version of her letter in his possession that served as a model for his 1779 edition. Otherwise, it is difficult to imagine that he would have made so many transcription errors in such a short letter.

In adopting this practice of giving only full forms, Franklin was not necessarily thinking of words of English origin but rather of polysyllabic, Latinate words which have always posed problems for English speakers. He must have imagined that a student would articulate each syllable of words like **etimaalodfi** “etymology,” **pronynsiefyn** “pronunciation,” **inkaənviiniensis** “inconveniences” very deliberately in the following manner. One can almost hear the student pronouncing each syllable as he writes them out:

- a. [ɛ] + [ti] + '[mɒ] + [lɔ] + ,[dʒi],
- b. ,[pɹɔ] + [nɹn] + [si] + '[ɛ(:)] + [ʃɹn]
- c. ,[ɪn] + [kɒn] + '[vi:] + [ni] + [ɛns]...

It is likely that these are the kinds of words which Vaughan, quoting Franklin, believes pose particular problems of pronunciation:

from want of public examples in his own country, it was often difficult to learn the proper sound of *certain words* (my italics), which occurred very frequently in our English writings and of which of course every American understood as to their meaning. (Vaughan, 1779, 475)

Wise considered the lack of vowel reduction in unstressed syllables as an inherent weakness of Franklin’s system but, in light of his pedagogical objectives, Franklin’s approach makes more sense. Indeed, enunciating all syllables as precisely as possible was advocated not only by Franklin but by Dr. Samuel

Johnson himself who contended, in the introduction to his 1755 *A Dictionary of the English Language*, that “the best general rule is to consider those as the most elegant speakers who deviate least from the written word” (Johnson, 1755, cf. MacMahon, 1998, 385).

In Chapter 11, I pointed out that after the aristocracy had been executed or forced into exile during the French Revolution, a new generation of grammarians, influenced by a new bourgeois class, rejected the older informal “bel usage” of the aristocracy in favour of the “*pronunciation savante*,” which I have interpreted to be the French spoken by the new “knowledge class” that had arisen during the Enlightenment. From now on, much as Johnson had proposed in his *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), the French grammarians stressed that every syllable should be pronounced precisely in a way that best corresponded to the written word (ibid.). Similar thinking was circulating among intellectuals in England.

This explains why nearly all his polysyllabic transcriptions appear stilted and unnatural. We shall also see that by proposing vowels as “fillers” in final unstressed syllables or preceding syllabic consonants where a schwa might normally be expected, he encounters precisely the same difficulties as the 17th-century New England clerks who resort to the same strategies (cf. Chapter 27), that is, inserting a series of unlikely vowels such as *a*, *o*, etc.

This leads to a related problem. How should one transcribe Franklin’s orthography in the IPA: literally or by interpreting and thus possibly altering the quality of his unstressed vowels? My approach has been to attempt to respect the pronunciation presented in his phonemic script as closely as possible. Having said this, I have allowed myself the freedom to juggle with certain allophones in syllables taking secondary or zero stress, particularly with his short *i* for which I admittedly hesitate between the use of tense [i] and lax [ɪ]. As stated before, I feel convinced they were allophones of /i/. Although we will probably never know their precise values, I have often transcribed adopted moderately reduced forms (cf. Chapter 27) as [ɪ] and their stressed forms as [i]. These interpretations are based primarily on Franklin’s own RMS descriptions but also on the spellings observed in the 17th-century town records, testimonies of the orthoepists and, finally, pertinent 19th- and 20th-century dialectal evidence.

3.1 RMS <o>

Table 1: vowel name	<o> /ɔ/
Table 2: key word(s)	<o> as in <old>, probably [ɔːld]
Table 3: description	1768/1779: The first Vowel naturally, and deepest sound; requires only to open the Mouth, and breathe thro’ it.

Franklin begins his analysis with <o>, a back mid vowel which he explains, “requires only to open the Mouth, and breathe thro’ it” (Table 3). The key word he gives in the second table is “old.” In this table, he repeats this reference to the “naturalness” of /ɔ/ stating that it is “The first vowel *naturally* and the deepest sound.” By “deepest,” he means that the vowel is pronounced as far back in the throat as possible. He may also be referring to the timbre. In his mind, this back mid /ɔ/ is the “natural” starting point for the description of the English phonological system, perhaps because, just as with his presentation of the consonants, he starts with sounds at the back of the vocal tract, i.e. the voiceless, glottal fricative /h/ (cf. below). The analysis of both his vocalic system but also the consonantal system will bear this out.

Nevertheless, the statement that one need “only open the Mouth and breathe thro’ it” is a woefully inadequate description from a modern linguistic perspective in that he gives no details about whether this <o> vowel is rounded, high-mid, mid, or low-mid, or whether it is long or short. Note that Franklin very accurately describes the rounding of /u/ which he portrays as follows: “the Lips to be gather’d up, leaving a small Opening” (cf. below). So, the fact that this kind of precision is lacking in his description of the /o/ vowel may not be due to an oversight but rather that rounding did not seem particularly pertinent in describing this vowel ([ɔ] ~ [ɔ̞]?). Could this suggest some degree of centralization of the kind suggested by Grandgent (1899) for the class of words corresponding to his “slightly advanced” “New England Short o” which I interpreted as being in the area of back mid [ɤ], a vowel very close to back mid [ɔ].⁸ Wise (1948, 115) concludes that “there seems no doubt that Franklin used the single, or pure vowel [ɔ(:)], “not the diphthongal [ou],” but he goes no further to state whether he meant the high-mid or mid back [ɔ] vowel. Again, [ɤ] is just a hair’s breadth above [ɤ̞]. It is generally accepted that diphthongized variant [ou] was not widespread until after 1800 (Dobson, 1968; MacMahon, 1998, 404; Beal, 1999; Lass, 1999; Görlach, 2012; Mazarin, 2020). The key word he gives for this vowel in Table 2 is “old” which I take to be a mid back [ɔ(:)]. Whether it was long or short is another question.

Neither does Franklin refer to its length but, then again, the shortness of this <o> vowel is a quintessential characteristic of this New England pronunciation

8 In a discussion with the Breton phonetician, Jean Le Dù, author of the *Nouvel Atlas de la Basse-Bretagne* (2001), and without any knowledge of the nature of “New England short o,” Jean asked me a very perceptive question in this regard: “How would Franklin have opposed ‘road’ and ‘rod’?” As we have seen from his rhymes in Chapters 21 and 22, he does not appear to have distinguished between them pronouncing both with [ɤ ~ ɤ̞], also rhyming *God* ~ *road*! We saw that a handful of *Lot* words, *rod*, *sod*, *trod*, etc. are regularly matched with an array of *Goat* and *Foot* words and were also pronounced in [ɔ ~ ɔ̞] or [ɤ̞ ~ ɤ̞]. This we have seen was also characteristic of Alexander Pope’s rhymes and, indeed, Shakespeare’s going back to 1593, although the value of the latter’s vowel may have been [u(:)].

and, for this reason, even if there were obvious examples with [ɔ(:)], the distinction appears not to have been salient to him. Indeed, I have already noted that Franklin indicates long vowels by either doubling the consonant or adding a circumflex. On these grounds alone, if he had truly considered <ɔ> to have possessed a long variant, one would have expected him to have indicated the long variant as either <ô> or <oo>, but he does not. The obvious question is whether this is truly a reflection of his Massachusetts idiolect or whether it is an oversight or deficiency in his scheme. I have no conclusive answer but suspect it is, at least partially, the former. Grandgent (1899) does, however, present the New England realization of “hole” as having long [ɔ:], as opposed to “whole” [hɔl], a distinction that neither Angus nor Wise mention in their respective studies.

To conclude this introduction of his /ɔ/ proto-phoneme, traditional English orthographic <ɔ> presents some interesting points of variation with Franklin’s transcriptions, to which we shall return below. It seems probable that, in devising his system, he simply regrouped all the words spelt <ɔ> and classified their variant pronunciations, possibly using Polly Stevenson as his main informant. Here are the following phonetic values of traditional <ɔ> spellings in stressed words and syllables which are far more “modern” than what we have seen in Part III.

<ɔ> /ɔ/- *old* “old” (key word), *onli* “only,” *ovyr* “over” (but *aavyrkym* “overcome”)

<y> /ʌ/- *uyns* “once,” *uyn* “one,” *yðyr* “other”

<aæ> /ɒ/- *naat* “not,” *aabdfeksyn* “objection,” *akyrz* “occurs,” *aav* “of”

Subcategories of all three can be pronounced [ɜ ~ ʏ] in 17th- and 18th-century Massachusetts but also in contemporary Norfolk (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 1971)

3.1.2 Franklin’s RMS Transcriptions of Traditional Orthographic <ɔ>

A closer examination of Franklin and Stevenson’s transcriptions of words transcribed with <ɔ> show that there are three examples of “other” spelt *yðyr* [ʏðəɪ?] while “over” is spelt both as *ovyr* [ʊvəɪ ~ ʏvəɪ?] and *aavyr* [ʊvəɪ]. Note also his spelling of “overcome” as *aavyrkym* [ʊvəɪkɪm] and not as *ovyrkym* suggests that the base form was primarily [ɒ]. They both transcribe “only” *onli* (6 examples) and “not” as *naat* (8 examples) but give one spelling with *not*, probably an error. The <ɔ> spellings would appear to be absent-minded errors.

Nevertheless, “not” is transcribed in the SED (Norfolk) as [nɒt] (Upton & Tilling, 1971, 1305). Lowell spells it *nut* in his *Biglow Papers* (1848) (cf. Chapters 21 and 22 for more examples). Given the dearth of examples in the RMS, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions. Could *aavyr* and *aavyrkym* be hypercorrections? If the spelling of *not* is not a simple lapse into traditional orthography, could it

reflect a trace of his New England [nʏt]?

As we saw in these same chapters, one would expect C1-C2 speakers to pronounce the following words with a long [ɔ:]: “grows” **groz**, “floating” **flotiŋ**, “roads” **rods**, “those” **ðoz** (twice), “though” **ðo** (twice), “wrote” **rot**, “low” **lo**, “spoke” **spok**, “whole” **huol** (once), **old** “old” (5 times), “mode” **mod** (3 times), “more” **mor** (6 times), “no” **no** (twice). Again, “old” is given as the key word in Table 2 for his symbol <ɔ> (and also in his 1768 table of key words), so the fact that it has been transcribed it five times in the letters shows that this cannot be an error or an inadvertent slip back into traditional spelling.

In Part III (Chapter 22), **rod** “road” and **huol** “whole” (along with, *home*, *stone*, *boat*, etc.) are given repeatedly as key words by nearly all the linguists who have studied this “New England short o” [ɹ ~ ʏ] going back to the 18th century, starting with Webster (1783). Also recall that both Barnes (1840s), Ellis, in his *Early English Pronunciation* (1869) and Avis (1971) give diphthongal variants of this short o; [ʊə] and [əə] for southwestern England and New England respectively. Orbeck (1927) also records examples of both “road” and “rod” spelt not only *rood* [ɹʊd ~ ɹɔd] but also diphthongal *rooade* [ɹʊəd]. Orbeck also found an example of “rod” spelt *rood*, a good example of a *Lot* vowel realized as [ɹ]. We saw in Part III that Trudgill (2016) records *road*, *home*, *stone*, etc. /ɹʊd/, /hʊm/ and /stʊn/ for Norfolk. To repeat, I gave a large number of examples from the SED (Orton & Tilling, 1970) where [ɹ] was given in many of these same environments in Norfolk, often alongside [ʊ] and [ʌ] (cf. Chapters 21 and 22).

There is no solid indication here that Franklin intended any of these examples to be pronounced with the Massachusetts “o-like” [ɹ] in his RMS. However, it seems clear from his rhymes studied in Part III that this was a trait deeply anchored in his natural idiom. Again, the fact that he does not indicate vowel length may suggest that he may have been oblivious to its precise quality (or length). The northern English phoneme /ʊ/ [ʊ ~ ɹ] for RP /ʌ/ is one of the most salient characteristics of the English of that region and, in my experience, even young well-educated northerners have difficulty adopting RP /ʌ/ (assuming that this is their objective, as it often once was in the past). I am convinced that Franklin would have had difficulty mastering this /ʌ/ pronunciation.

It is probably because of uncertainties of these kinds that he enlisted Stevenson’s help in the first place. Having said this, nowhere in his RMS scheme does he appear to confuse these words with [ʊ ~ ɹ] unlike what we observe in his and the other New Englanders’ poetry. In other words, we find no examples of “road” spelt **rud** / **ryd** or “whole” spelt **hul** / **hył**. Having said this, recall that Grandgent insists on correcting Dearborn’s spelling of “home” <hum> to <hóm> [hʏm]! Note too that Lowell systematically spells “whole” as *holl* [hʏł] (14 occurrences) but spells it *hull* in his glossary! If Franklin did realize this <o> character in the Boston manner, it probably would have to have been close to [ɹ]...

His <o> spelling also appears in words with initial <pro-> (both pseudo-morphemes and true morphemes) and takes primary, secondary or zero stress would suggest a slightly reduced articulation in natural speech, but we have seen that this was not the point of Franklin’s scheme. For practical reasons, I have indicated these as [ɔ] here *pronaauns* [p.ɪɔ’nɒuns] for “pronounce” (one example) rather than [p.rə’nɒuns] which was probably his paritary pronunciation. Similar examples are *pronynsiefyn* (twice) [prɔ,nɪnsi.‘ɛ(:)ʃən] “pronunciation,” *pronaaunsin* [p.ɪɔ’nɒunsin] “pronouncing,” *propozed* [p.ɪɔ’pɔ(:)zd]. In this last example, the <ed> spelling is most likely a transcription error here.

Interestingly, Franklin writes “to” as *to* [tɔ] fifteen times in his transcriptions, too many times for this to be an error and only seven times as *tu* [tu]. I have also mentioned that, on one occasion, he gives it as unstressed *ty* [tə]. This means two things: Franklin’s dominant stressed pronunciation was something close to [tɔ] and, secondly, since Stevenson writes it only as *tu* [tu] (and one example of reduced *ta* [ta]), the latter realization is likely to have been most associated with fashionable London pronunciation. Dobson (1968, 460-461) shows that there was considerable variation between the orthoepists between [tu] and [tɔ] going back to the 15th century. Franklin’s [tu] transcriptions seem to show an attempt to “accommodate” his pronunciation to that of London speakers, which may reflect another possibility of code-switching. Franklin very probably used both pronunciations quite unconsciously. He also transcribes “into” as *intu* twice.

In conclusion, the quality of his <o> character appears to conform, at least partially, to Massachusetts usage, namely, short [ɔ] or, more likely, a slightly advanced [ɤ]. If so, one wonders whether Polly Stevenson heard the difference or, perhaps more likely, that she was not yet sufficiently comfortable using the alphabet to detect such fine differences in transcription. On occasion, we shall see that Franklin commits errors that are due to his own lack of practice in applying his system. As I have previously stated, this is particularly visible in his July 20, 1768 letter in which I identified over twenty transcription errors, many of which he corrects between the lines.

3.2 RMS spelling <aa>

Table 1: vowel name	[ɒ(:) ~ [ɑ(:)]
Table 2: key word(s)	<John>, <folly>, <awl>, <ball>. NB: The 1768 version included <i>fall</i> and <i>ball</i> , which were crossed out. <i>Awl</i> was absent and added later by Franklin.
Table 3: description	1768/1779: “The next, requiring the Mouth open’d a little more or hollower.”

This vowel was one of the six new characters Franklin conceived for his alphabet. It resembles a fused Greek $\alpha + \alpha = \langle \alpha\alpha \rangle$ and, given that he was an expert printer, this was an intentional choice. The question is why he chose to fuse them as *aa*. Although he does not say so, there is a high probability that the $\langle \text{all} \rangle$ and $\langle \text{awl} \rangle$ words were long, hence the logic of a fused *aa*.

Recall that in Chapter 13 we saw that the $\langle \alpha \rangle$ symbol was also the one chosen by John Wilkins (*Gad*, *almuṭiti*, *af*, etc.) pronounced [ɒ: ~ ɑ:] as in General American today. Franklin may therefore have followed his lead on this point (cf. Chapter 13), as he may have done for his use of $\langle \mathfrak{u} \rangle$. Note too that he also adapts the Greek $\langle \eta \rangle$ symbol to represent IPA [ɨ]. The founders of the IPA also drew from the same source.

Greek $\langle \alpha \rangle$ is normally realized as [ɑ:]. This interpretation appears to be supported by Nares (1784, 3) who writes that words with $\langle \text{au} \rangle$ or $\langle \text{aw} \rangle$, such as “author,” “law,” are pronounced with a broad $\langle \text{a} \rangle$, which is the “legitimate” sound of the French “long a.” Elsewhere, Nares describes this “open French $\langle \text{a} \rangle$ ” as [ɑ:] in $\langle \text{âge} \rangle$. He adds that it is found in all monosyllables ending in $\langle \text{-ll} \rangle$. He is not alone in his analysis of [ɑ:] preceding [-l]: cf. Kenrick (1773), Nares (1784), Walker (1791), MacKintosh (1797), Duponceau (1818), Grandgent (1899), who compare the sound to the $\langle \text{â} \rangle$ of French *pâte*, *âge*, etc. Nares (1784, 7), for instance, writes:

The sound which writers have styled the broad sound of $\langle \text{a} \rangle$, is that which is properly represented, in our language, by $\langle \text{au} \rangle$ or $\langle \text{aw} \rangle$ as in *author*, *law*, &c. It is the legitimate sound of the long a in the French language.

Taken literally, this absolutely rules out the possibility that these words were realized as [ɔ:]. It is not impossible, however, that to these generations of speakers, French â [ɑ:] sounded identical to [ɔ:]. Based on this evidence, I concur with Mazarin (2020, 14) that the oldest pronunciation of *Taught* and *Law* words was probably [ɑ:] followed by later rounding to [ɔ:] during the 18th century. It was Daniel Jones who introduced the /ɔ:/ into the 1917 edition of his *English Pronouncing Dictionary*. Recall that, in the last chapter, Kenrick (1773, 24), like Franklin, asserts that *not*, *what* and *pond* with *nought*, *wall*, *pawn'd* differ only in terms of length, not quality. The vowel in all these words appear to be the same here [ɑ ~ ɔ] vs [ɑ: ~ ɔ:]. Wallis and Wilkins state the same (see below).

Recall, however, that in the Massachusetts vernacular, “father” is today pronounced [ˈfɑ:ðəl], not [ˈfæ:ðəl]. We saw in Part III that [ˈfæ:ðəl] and even [ˈfɛ:ðəl] were possible in earlier varieties, including Franklin’s. The latter have survived in the modern dialects of England and Ireland but not in America.

On the basis of Franklin’s key words, Wise (1948, 115) interprets *John* and *folly* to have the value of short [ɒ] while *awl* and *ball* are pronounced [ɔ] which he considers to be long, hence [ɔ:] (my [ɔ:]). I concluded the same thing based

on the fact that Franklin's key words for his other vowels also oppose short and long phonemic variants, with the notable exception of <o> and <u>. Wise goes on to say that "Granting our present opinion that there are differences of tongue elevation, of tongue backing and probably of muscle tension which distinguish these the two sounds, *they are close enough acoustically to make it clear why Franklin can consider using the same symbol for both by doubling it for the "long" member of the pair* (my italics)." I have shown that Franklin only doubles this **aa** character in one exceptional example before <ll>, namely, **aaal** for "all." Stevenson transcribes "all" in the same fashion, showing that they must have agreed on this point (or perhaps that she was simply following his lead).

In his hand-written July 20th letter, he transcribes "brought" with two unbound **a** vowels, **braat** (cf. Chapter 25). The fact that he did not fuse them here (it is the only example of this) must mean that, for him, the vowel was inherently long. He must have felt that it was particularly long when preceding velar [l] in stressed monosyllables, hence, **aaal** for "all." If so, one would imagine that he should have doubled the vowel in "ball" [bɔ:l ~ bɑ:l], "fall" [fɔ:l ~ fɑ:l], "all" [ɔ:l ~ ɑ:l], etc. It was thus undoubtedly considerably longer than the vowel of "John" [dʒɒn] or "folly" [fɒli] and this probably explains why Franklin crossed out ~~fa~~ and ~~ba~~ in his 1768 table. **Aw** [ɔ:l] is also absent in his 1768 table. He may have asked Vaughan to reintroduce these while the latter was preparing the edition in 1779. Note in passing that this [ɔ: ~ ɑ:] pronunciation is also given for the modal "shall" by Webster (1789, 114) and Ellis (1869, 1067) who record [ʃɔl]. "Shall" is not recorded in the RMS. I also recorded it as such in my IPA transcription of Wilkins' "Apostles' Creed" (Chapter 13). Until I found these older descriptions of "shall," I thought that I had probably made a transcription error.

As we have seen (Part III), Grandgent (1899, 219) describes it as follows: "Nowadays, American ɔ is nearly always unrounded and is formed by drawing the tongue as *far back and as low down as it will go*." *Once again, this implies* [ɑ(:)] rather than [ɔ(:)] or [ɔ(:)]. This corresponds to descriptions of *caught* (and *haul*) as having the vowel of the old pronunciation of French *pâte*, meaning [ɑ:] but certainly not [ɔ] and, even less possible, [ɔ]. Clearly, Grandgent's use of the character [ɔ] has little to do phonetically with rounded RP /ɔ:/ (cf. below Chapter 21 for more detail).

Mazarin (2020, 14) rightly comes to the same conclusion in his discussions of Bellot (1586) and Miège's (1680s) representation of this vowel and contends that [ɑ:] was probably one of the dominant pronunciations of such words during the late 16th century and presumably during the 17th and 18th centuries. Here Franklin's fused <**aa**> can only be referring to a sound which, in the dialects, perhaps wavered between [ɑ(:) ~ ɔ(:)]. Interpreted literally, however, Franklin's description of the tongue being lowered (from [ɔ]) and the vowel sounding "hollower" than /ɔ/ is vague. Playing devil's advocate, this could potentially

encompass pronunciations ranging from [ɔ:], [ɒ:] or [ɑ:]! If this pronunciation was truly as “far back and as low down” as the tongue will go during the 19th century, it may have retained a trace of the former competition between the two back low vowels, [ɒ: ~ ɑ:], in which case the latter could be a survival from EME. Mazarin (2020, 15) provides food for thought here: “ME /au/ developed a monophthongal allophone [ɑ:] that was used in certain positions — most typically before /l/ in words like *fall*.”

MacMahon (1998, 407-409) provides some supporting evidence that /ɑ:/ may even have already been a common pronunciation in words such as *John*, *folly*, *awl* and *ball* in some varieties of American English as early as the 18th century. This suggests that, at least for some speakers, there was no phonemic distinction in American English between what would otherwise be transcribed in contemporary RP as [ɒ] (*John* and *folly*) and [ɔ:] (*awl* and *ball*). And yet, like Franklin, Wallis and Wilkins both give a minimal pair, *folly* ~ *fall*, which is nearly identical to Franklin’s *folly* and *ball* (but *fall* in his 1768 version!) and, like Franklin, they claim the vowel was qualitatively identical. Dobson (1968, 225) paraphrases Wallis as follows: “thus *fall* and *folly*, between which there is no difference except in quantity.” To repeat, I argued in Chapter 13 that the similarity of their minimal pairs, combined with the evidence above, reinforces the hypothesis that Franklin had indeed studied Wallis and Wilkins’ work. It could also imply that varieties of English English, like some American colonial koine speakers, did not systematically distinguish phonemically between [ɑ:] and [ɒ:] as early as this time.

Based on Wallis’ and Wilkins’ observations, it appears virtually certain that this levelled “American” feature is not an American innovation at all. The blurring of phonemic lines between /ɑ:/ and /ɒ:/ may be another common inheritance resulting from the 16th- and 17th-century EME English dialects. Ellis (1869, 1072) provides an argument in which he argues that “It is probable that the (ɔ) assigned to the Orthographist and Dyche, did not differ from Sheridan’s (A)” (i.e. [ɑ]; cf. my introduction to Chapter 21).

However, MacMahon (1998) and Görlach (2012) seem to assume that modern RP /ɒ/ and /ɔ:/ were the original 18th-century pronunciations for these words (cf. more on this below). We saw in Chapter 21 that Görlach argues the same point as MacMahon, that is, they both seem to assume that rounded [ɔ:] is the older pronunciation of *Taught* and *Law* words. As I have stated above, Mazarin (2020, 14) has convincingly argued that the rounded modern RP [ɔ:] in words such as “thought” and “all” was introduced into the RP system by Daniel Jones in 1917. Contrary to what is generally believed, it is likely to be a more recent phenomenon as a prestigious pronunciation (although [ɔ:] almost certainly existed in dialect).

By the late 1800s, the merged TAUGHT–NORTH–CLOTH phoneme in RP had risen almost as high as cardinal [ɔ:], where it further merged with FORCE, which had lowered earlier in the century. In 1917, Daniel Jones frankly symbolized this new British vowel as low-mid IPA ɔ:. In a further break with tradition, Jones assigned the now-vacant space at cardinal [ɑ:] to the START–BATH–PALM vowel, which he symbolized as IPA ɑ:, admitting, however, that its phonetic realization “varies between cardinal «ɑ» and a point about half-way between cardinal «a» and cardinal «ɑ»”. (Mazarin, 2020, 14; cf. Jones, 1917, xxii)

To conclude, the older (or simply more dominant) [ɑ: ~ ɔ:] pronunciations of *Thought/Law* words appear to have been best preserved in American, Canadian and Australian English as well as in a number of non-RP varieties of British and Irish English. Having said that, we have seen in Chapter 21 that /ɑ:/ and /ɔ:/ phonemic distinctions were preserved in some varieties of New England English, but the differences I have heard (*caught* vs *cot*) by older speakers from New Bedford, Mass., are so slight that it is difficult to distinguish between them.

3.2.1 Traces of “New England o” [ɤ] in the RMS?

I have just argued that Franklin’s RMS descriptions, combined with comparative evidence, suggest either [ɑ ~ ɔ] for *John* and *folly*, and [ɑ: ~ ɔ:] for *awl* and *ball*. If so, and once again, what are we to make of the evidence regarding Franklin’s rhyme schemes? In Chapter 22, I proposed a hypothesis that [ɤ ~ ɔ] was probably his natural Boston realization of *John* (consider also the numerous God rhymes!). This conclusion was partly based on the following poem which Franklin composed in 1743 in his *Poor Richard’s Almanack* and in which he rhymes *John*, *own* and *done* (respectively /ɑ:/, /ou/ and /ʌ/ in contemporary GA).

But I have mistaken the Case, Sir, says *John*,
The dead Bull I talk of, and please you, ’s my *own*:
And yours is the Beast that the Mischief has *done*.

We saw in Chapters 21 and 22 that not only the New England poets but English poets going back to Shakespeare rhyme combinations taken from the same class of words, so this is certainly not a quirk. Furthermore, since these verses were composed long before his extended stays in England, and unless we are dealing with imperfect rhymes, it would appear to reflect the 18th-century Boston vernacular. If “John” truly had been pronounced [dʒɑn ~ dʒɔn] as he indicates for his RMS, the rhyme would require that “done” and “own” be realized as [*dɑ(:)n ~ *dɔ(:)n] “done” and [*ɑ:n ~ *ɔ:n] “own.” Given that Franklin’s rhymes are nearly always perfect (cf. Chapter 15), why would these potentially “imperfect rhymes” involve so many words belonging to this same subclass of back vowel? Again, the common denominator of these three words appears to be a vowel close to “o-like” [ɤ]. But this is not at all what is reflected in Franklin’s 1768/1779 reform proposal.

His RMS transcriptions are also contradicted by his rhymes studied in his *Poor Richard's Almanack* poems, where oppositions between modern GA /ou/ - /ɑ:/ (RP /əʊ/ - /ɒ/) are systematically neutralized: *sloth* ~ *both*, *cost* ~ *engrost*, *boast* ~ *cost*, *coast* ~ *frost*, *lost* ~ *boast*, but also *abode* ~ *trod* and also *wont* ~ *blunt*.

The only possible RMS example of a “New England short o” examples in his transcriptions may be **lonj** [lɔŋ ~ lʏŋ]? for “long” (rather than expected **laaŋ**). Since I have found only one example of this kind, it is impossible to know if it is a slip revealing his natural pronunciation or an absentminded lapse back into traditional spelling. **Rod**, **groz**, **huol** for “road,” “grows” and “whole” have already been considered above. However, he also gives **alaaŋ** [a'lɔ(:)ŋ ~ a'lɑ(:)ŋ] for “along.” This is the closest I can come to demonstrating that “John” may have had a variant pronunciation that was realized as [dʒʏŋ] or even [dʒɔŋ] in his New England idiolect. We have already seen Orbeck (1927, 19) shows numerous examples of *Lot* words that are raised to [ɔ(:) ~ u(:)], including “lot” itself, which he records as *loott* and which I have interpreted as [lʏt ~ lʏt].

3.2.2 Orthographic <or>: [ɔ(:)ɪ] or [ɔ(:)ɪ ~ ʏɪ]?

We shall now turn our attention to examples taken from his and Stevenson's transcriptions. By and large, unlike the discrepancy between examples of “New England short o” and his reformed spelling transcriptions in the preceding section, aside from the few exceptions just indicated above, Franklin's *North* and *Force* words are rendered quite systematically by <aar> (recall his rhyme of *horse* ~ *north* (both with [ɔɪ])): **faar** [fɔɪ] “for” (five occurrences), **faarmerli** [fɔɪmɛɪli] for “formerly,” **refaarmesfyn** [rɛfɔɪ'mɛ(:)fɛn] / [rɛfɔɪ'mɛ(:)fɛn] “reformation,” **faarget** [fɔɪgɛt] “forget,” **purfaarm** [pɜɪ'fɔɪm] “perform,” **faart** [fɔɪt] “short,” **taarents** [tɔɪrɛnts] for “torrents,” **baardyr** [bɔɪdɛɪ] for “border,” **staaum** [stɔɪm] for “storm” with the same vowel respectively, **aaurdyrs** [ɔɪrdɛɪz] “orders,” **aarθaa grafi** [ɔɪ'θɔ:græfi] “orthography.”

As noted above, there are exceptions to this tendency where he offers transcriptions with <or> spellings, such as **oridzinali** [ɔɪ'ɪdʒɪnɛɪli] for “originally,” **forfaðers** [fɔɪ'fæðɛɪz] for “forefathers.” Among these are Franklin's transcriptions of **kors** “course” and **diskors** “discourse,” which suggest pronunciations of [kɔɪs] and [dɪskɔɪs]. This is interesting in that these last two spellings contradict the rhymes (or at least my analysis of them) studied in one of Franklin's poems in which he matches *discourse* ~ *worse* (1736), which I interpreted as being realized as [dɪskɔɪs] ~ [wɔɪs]. If so, he should have transcribed “course” and “discourse” **kaars** and **diskaars**. This analysis (cf. Chapter 20) was supported by a number of similar examples such as Franklin's rhymes of *purse* ~ *horse*, *discourse* ~ *worse* and *worse* ~ *curse*... These examples suggest that he tended to pronounce it the old-fashioned way in his

natural idiom. I have also argued earlier that, at least in New England, the [ɒɪ] realization in these words may have been viewed stylistically as more formal and appropriate for poetic use. Whatever the truth is, in his RMS he adopts the innovative pronunciation that was gaining ground in London during his stay there and he transcribes them in his RMS as follows: **uyrd** [uəɪd] “word,” **uyrds** [uəɪdz] “words” (9 examples) and **uyrks** [uəɪks] “works” and **uyrs** [uəɪs] “worse” ([əɪ] here because of r-coloring). These examples of centralizations are clearly not errors and appear to reinforce the hypothesis that he was modelling his RMS on London English. Recall that in Chapter 20, Franklin’s rhymes suggest [ʊɒɪd] “word,” [ʊɒɪk] “work” and [ʊɒɪs] “worse.”

By Grandgent’s day, we have seen that postvocalic /r/ was almost wholly absent from Massachusetts English, just as in RP: “for,” “storm,” etc. would normally be pronounced [ɑ:] today, as [fɑ:] (as opposed to [fa:] for “far”) and [stɑ:m] (German, personal notes, New Bedford area). This realization would seem to be a relic of an older Type C2 or Type D pronunciation.

3.2.3 Miscellaneous Examples

Examples of <o> words pronounced [ɒ(:)] are **aon** [ɒn] “on” (6 examples), **kanəat** [kæ'nɒt] “cannot,” **etimaalodfi** [etɪ'mɒ:lɒdʒi] “etymology,” **faalo'd** [fə'lɒd] “followed” and **bikaaz** [bi'kɒ:z] “because,” **aabdʒekʃɪn** [əb'dʒekʃən] “objection,” **aakyrz** [ə'kæɪz] “occurs,” **aavyrkym** [əvəɪ'kɪm] “overcome.”

As mentioned above, his RMS transcription of **alaan** [ə'lɒŋ] seems to clash with the rhymes he gives in his *Poor Richard’s Almanack* where he matched pairs such as *tongue* [tʌŋ] ~ *strong* [strʌŋ] (1735), *young* [jʌŋ] and *along* [ə'lʌŋ], corresponding to GA [ʌ] and [ɑ:] respectively (cf. Chapter 20). To take just one example:

When you see the poor Child that’s weakly and young
Forc’d thro’ thick and thin to trudge it *along*. (1743; cf. Chapter 21 and Chapter 22)

Recall, however, that he also transcribes “long” as **lon** [lɒŋ? ~ lʌŋ]? on one occasion. Is this an unintended lapse back into traditional spelling or into his natural pronunciation of the word?

Elsewhere, he provides the full form in stressed syllables. Again the [ɒ ~ ɑ] pronunciation here is unambiguous: “confident” **kaanfident** [kən'fɪdɪnt], “contrary” **kaantreri** [kən'tɹɛɪɪ] and “consequently” **kaansikuentli** [kən'sɪkuentli], which are stressed on the first syllable, but also unstressed syllables such as **kaantinuəli** [kən'tɪnuəli] “continually” (as opposed to ***kyntinuəli** [kən'tɪnuəli]) or **kaantinud** [kən'tɪnu:d] “continued” rather than ***kyntinud** [kən'tɪnu:d]), the latter being stressed on the penultimate. In this respect, Franklin’s pronunciation of <con-> may have resembled that of modern

northern English pronunciation, which has secondary stress on the first syllable. Franklin gives only one example of a fully unstressed pronunciation of <com-> as it would have been (and still is) realized as **kym** [kəm], namely, for “compared” which is spelt **kympêrd** [kəm'pɛ:ɪd ~ kəm'pɛ:ɪd]. This unstressed first syllable betrays his natural pronunciation, which could also have given [kəm'pæ:ɪd] in older Boston English.

Words which are normally unstressed in connected speech are systematically stressed in Franklin and Stevenson's transcriptions. As we shall see for his pronunciation of “the” as **ði** [ði], “a” as **e** [ɛ ~ ɛ] etc., it seems quite clear that he and Stevenson felt that the full form was the most “correct” or, at least, the most representative pronunciation for this vowel. Normally unstressed “of” is transcribed exclusively as **av** [ɒv] (26 times) and never as ***ʊv** ([əv, ə]). Similarly, **ar** [ɔɪ] “or” appears six times and never as ***ʊr** (unstressed [əɪ]). Once again, the reason for this was that Franklin conceived his system to be read aloud in a very deliberate manner (and very artificially) so as to enable students to acquire clear and, in his mind, “proper” diction and pronunciation.

We only encounter a few words spelt with Franklin's **ʊ**. These are limited to **ʊðʊr** [ʊðəɪ] for “other” (three times), **uyn** [uɪn] for “one” (twice) and **uyns** [uɪns] “once.”

3.3 RMS <a>

Table 1: vowel name	/æ/
Table 2: key word(s)	<a> as in <man>, <can>
Table 3: description	1768/1779: “The next, still more;” this is in reference to aa above: “The next, requiring the Mouth open'd a little more or hollower.”

By “the next, still more” he means that, in order to produce this **a** vowel, the tongue is lowered even further than his **aa** character, that is low front [æ]. George Krapp (1925, 79) argued that Franklin's **a** symbol was pronounced [æ] in all stressed positions as in GA and even where modern RP English lowers it to [ɑ:] (and Boston [ɑ:]) when it precedes [-f], [s], [θ], [ɹ], etc. (cf. Chapter 19). This [æ(:)] corresponds to the New England poets' rhyme schemes, except in cases of raising to [ɛ:].

Wise (1948, 116) makes an interesting suggestion that the vowels of *fat* and *marry* may in fact be [æ] and [a] respectively, in which case, “the later development of ‘large’ and ‘hardly’ suggest that they might have been [lardʒ] and [hardli]; that would permit [ʒa'mɛ] (and not ['ʒæmɛ]).” By a “later development,” Wise is probably referring to the traditional realization of these words as [la:dʒ] and [ha:dli] in contemporary Massachusetts English. We have seen that

all the West and North of England have [a] rather than [æ] (Wells, 1982) but Wise's hypothesis is somewhat contradicted by the tendency demonstrated in Franklin's tendency to raise [æ] before /r/ and [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] in other environments. Wise himself concludes that Franklin probably "had no [a], and certainly no [ɑ]" (Wise, 1948, 116).

Once again, Kenrick (1773, 24) supports Franklin's pronunciation, writing that the "syllables" of *hat*, *hand*, *mann'd* have "the same quality as *hard* and *command*, "differing only in quantity or time."

It is certain that Webster favoured the lowered [a(:)] pronunciation in these environments when speaking his native idiom and he firmly believed it represented the older and thus "purer" English pronunciation of the word. Nevertheless, although Webster's insistence on this point was undoubtedly founded on its widespread lowering in areas of New England, Grandgent appears to believe that <a> [æ] + <r> represented older Massachusetts pronunciation (1899, 207). Given that Franklin was nearly half a century older than Webster, this is entirely possible.

Grandgent (*ibid.*, 214), citing Alden (1813), states that, in New England, "back" and "bark" differed only in terms of vowel length, presumably [bæk] and [bæ:k] respectively. In my own experience in Massachusetts (New Bedford area), however, these words are now pronounced [bæk] and [ba:k], although [bæ:k] strikes me (but only impressionistically) as a Boston accent. The slightly lowered [ba:ɪk] realization would have been preferred by Webster (1789). Considering Franklin was born in 1706, we saw in Part III from his poetry that he retained the older [æɪ] pronunciation. This also explains why we see no transcription errors such as **fæðə* for "father" or **hærdli* for "hardly."

Furthermore, Ellis (1869), Grandgent (1899), Angus (1935), Wise (1948) and Mazarin (2020) all transcribe Franklin's <ar> as [æɪ]: *hardli* [hærdli] "hardly" and *fæðyr* [fæðər] "father." Grandgent (1899, 213) explains that "in America [a: ~ ɑ:] was apparently slower in making its way" than in England. On the contrary, recall examples from 17th-century spellings from the town records such as *feather* for "father" and *peath* for "path" (Hempstead records, NY, 1679). Today, for many Massachusetts speakers, the pronunciation of "father" is [ɑ:] and not [a:] as in GA. The conclusion is that it resulted from the lowering of [æ:], the latter being Franklin's likely disparitary pronunciation.

For these reasons, [æ] appears not only in words such as *man*, *can* but also in his *past*, *blast*, *lastin* which represents [pæst], [blæst] and [læstin] respectively as in GA today. Franklin also transcribes *kalm* as [kælm], a pronunciation retained as [kæm] [sic] by older speakers in the Tennessee Smokies until the mid-20th century (Hall, 1942). Shores (1984) also indicates this same [kæ:m] pronunciation on Tangier Island in the Chesapeake Bay, although he states that he had never heard it personally (2007) (i.e. older informants claimed they had

heard it a few generations ago). Franklin's transcription of such words must have struck him as natural and acceptable. These [æ] pronunciations may have been reinforced by his long stay in Philadelphia, where the lowered [a: ~ ɑ:] pronunciation was rarely heard. We saw that, even today, in Bolton, Lancashire, Shorrocks (1998) records only [æ:] for words like *grass*, *past*, *half*, etc.

3.3.1 [æ] > [ɛ]

Once in London, Franklin could not have failed to have noticed that the raised pronunciation [æ : ~ ɛ:] was advocated in “polite” London society. This too would have discouraged lowering to [a: ~ ɑ:]. In a footnote to Franklin's reform, Benjamin Vaughan described *mem* [mɛm] for “Ma'am” as “affected,” which Franklin matches with “maim” [mɛ:m]. This is confirmed by Beal (2010, 6), who writes:

This is corroborated by Horn & Lehnert (1954, 343), who cite the remark of Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, who lived in England in 1770 and between 1774 and 1775, that “*zierlichen Mädchen* (dainty young ladies) pronounced the <a> in *nasty* so high that it sounded almost like *nehsti* and his comment that this was in order to avoid the ‘vulgar.’”

We saw in Part III that the argument in favour of a universal /æ/ pronunciation in most stressed environments is countered in his systematic transcription of “has” as *hes*, “have” as *hev* and “are” as *er* and, on one occasion, even as *eer* [ɛ:ɪ] (in his July 20th letter). This is confirmed by his rhymes of *have* ~ *brave*, *have* ~ *save*, *have* ~ *gave* but also *west* ~ *last*, *race* ~ *pass*, *together* ~ *rather*, *racking* ~ *taking* and *past* ~ *taste*, recalling *peath* [pɛ:θ] for “path” in the Hempstead records, NY (1679) (cf. Chapter 19).

The “vulgar” pronunciation, of course, was [ˈna:sti ~ ˈnɑ:sti] the latter now being the rule in RP English. This shows how ephemeral socially-sanctioned pronunciations can be.

Recall, however, that Vaughan felt he should have used two different characters for these words (Franklin, 1779, 470). Considering Franklin's contention that each orthographic character should represent a single sound, adopting this [ɛ(:)] pronunciation was as trendy as it was practical.

Contrary to many authorities of the time, Nares (1784, 3-4) appears to accept this purportedly “uncouth” lowered pronunciation [ɑ:] without expressing an overtly negative judgement:

A frequently has a sound which by many writers has been called its open sound. It is the sound proper to that vowel in Italian, and frequently given to it in French, as in the termination *-age*, and in many other instances. In the old orthography of our language, it was often represented by *au*; as in *daunce*, *graunt*, &c. The following list contains, I believe, all the words in which this sound of *a* occurs...

(*calm, dance, father...*) A slight view of the above list will shew this effect is chiefly produced by combinations of particular letters. The consonants *f, l, n* and *s* appear to be principally concerned in it: and the words might, for the most part, have been arranged from such considerations; thus, words in *-sk, ask, bask, cask, flask, mask*; words in *-ss ass, brass, class, glass, &c...*

On pages 4 through 6, Nares gives a host of examples pronounced [ɑ:] where Franklin gives [æ(:)]: *advantage, after, balm, bastard, ant, blast, calf, calm, cask*, etc. This testimony is interesting in that it shows that, even among themselves, the orthoepists did not have a common code for evaluating or even defining language propriety.

Note that from colonial New England to Virginia, the accepted pronunciation of words like *dance, grant* but also *sauce, haunt, vaunt, taunt, sauce*, etc. appears to have been generally [æ:] and not [ɑ: ~ ɑ:], with which it was nevertheless probably in competition. This pronunciation [æ:] survived in the Smokies until the mid-20th century and Shorrocks (1998) and Burton (2010) show parallel examples with [ɑ:] and [æ:] respectively for Dorset and Lancashire (cf. Chapter 19). I found no examples of lowering in Franklin's or Stevenson's transcriptions (unless one accepts the possibility that Franklin's <a> may have had two realizations, [æ] and [ɑ]; Wise, 1948).

3.3.2 Franklin's Transcriptions

MacMahon (1998, 389) writes that unstressed vowels in a word like "adherent" were not /ə/, but, for many speakers, still [æ] or [ɛ]. I have indicated a continuum of possible pronunciations in the glossary by taking into account possible registers with [æ] as the disparitary pronunciation advocated in polite society and [ɑ] or [ə] when unstressed in more informal paritary speech (cf. Appendix 3).

This probably explains why Franklin's system calls for an underlying /æ/ phoneme, probably with the following allophones: [æ] when stressed and [ɑ ~ ə] when unstressed. We have already seen (cf. <aa> above) that, with a few exceptions, traditional English orthographic <all> is represented rendered as <aal>. I have already noted that, on a number of occasions, Franklin doubles this Siamese *aa* for "all," which should be interpreted as a long vowel [ɑ:l]. "All" *aaal* [p(:)l ~ ɑ:l] (four examples), "call" *kaal* (three examples) [kə(:)l ~ kɑ:l], "almost" *aalmoſt* [p(:)lmøst] or [pɫmø(:)st], "always" *aaluaz* [p(:)lwæz?] possibly an error for *aaluez* [p(:)lwɛz]. For purposes of simplicity, this vowel will be transcribed [p:] in this environment.

With secondary stress, it retains its quality, *aalmɪti* [pɫ'mɪti], *aalredi* (three examples) [pɫ'ædi]. An exception to this rule is *alfabet* ['ælfabet] where stressed <a> + <l> is pronounced [æɫ]. But note that the first syllable is stressed here (compare this with Franklin's *kalm* [kælm] above, also with the retention

of postvocalic /l/).

When stressed, it is always noted as [æ]: **lad** [læd], **land** [lænd], **man** [mæn], **kan** [kæn], **aktuali** [æktua.li], **languedʒ** (3 examples) [læŋ.guədʒ], **Latin** (2 examples) [lætɪn], **satisfyid** [sætɪs.fəɪd], **Saksyn** “Saxon” [sæksɪn ~ 'sæksən], **hapend** [hæpænd ~ 'hæpənd], **imadfin** [i'mædʒɪn], **inhabitant** (2 examples) [ɪn'hæbɪtənt ~ ɪn'hæbɪtənt], **praktis** (2 examples) [pɹæktɪs], **madam** [mæ,dæm ~ 'mæ,dəm]... **akiuret** [ækiu.ɹet] (notice the [kj] transcribed by Stevenson), **natural** [nætʃərəl] but **natfyralli** [nætʃərə.li]. The difference between these last three pronunciations will be examined in greater detail in the section on consonants Chapter 28.

As pointed out above, MacMahon (1998, 339) notes that <a> occurring word-initially in syllables taking secondary stress was nevertheless pronounced [æ], where today GA or RP speakers would normally reduce it to [a] or [ə]. In all likelihood, reduction was thus common in paritary speech in Franklin's day. Nevertheless, for the reasons previously expressed, Franklin attributes the disparitary [æ] pronunciation to assist those learning to read whereby polysyllabic words are decomposed orally, syllable by syllable, as in the first column:

Stressed	(disparitary)	Unstressed (paritary)
admit	[æd 'mɪt]	[ad'mɪt > əd'mɪt]
advantedʒez	[æd'væn 'tɛ 'dʒɪz]	[ad'væntədʒɪz > əd'væntədʒɪz]
akaərdɪŋ	[æ 'kɒ(:)ɪ 'dɪŋ]	[a'kɒ(:)ɪdɪŋ > ə'kɒ(:)ɪdɪn]
akuɹɪ (2)	[æ 'kwɹɪ əɪ]	[a'kuəɪəɪ > ə'kwəɪəɪ]
afekʃnətli	[æ 'fek 'ʃən 'et 'li]	[a'fekʃənətli > ə'fekʃənətli]
alon	[æ 'lɒ(:)n]	[a'lɪn > ə'lɪn]
alæŋ	[æ 'lɒŋ]	[a'lɒŋ > ə'lɪŋ]...

In keeping with his desire to present a formal model of pronunciation to enable uneducated people to read (most often dialect speakers), we have seen that Franklin rarely reduces commonly used words such as **an**, **am** and **and** which are presented under their full forms: [æn], [æm] and [ænd]. There can be no doubt, however, that these were reduced in natural speech to [ən] ~ [ŋ], [əm] ~ [m] and [ən] ~ [ŋ] respectively (see Chapter 25).

When a + r appears in stressed syllables, it is generally pronounced as [æɹ] which is representative of Type C1 speakers (Mazarin, 2020): **karidʒɪz** [kæɹɪdʒɪz], **hardli** [hæɹdli], **far** [fæɹ], etc.

Franklin even transcribes [æ] in words coloured by <w-> or <wh-> where we have seen that, already in the 17th century, lowering to [ɒ] had already occurred

in vulgar speech: **huat** [hwæt] “what,” **huatever** [hwæt'evəɪ] “whatever,” **uas** [wæs] “was.” For this last example, I feel it is counter-intuitive to analyze the vowel literally as [wæs]. Lowering to [a] may have been an option here but not to [ɑ] because he almost certainly would have transcribed it ***uacs** or **uacɹ** in his RMS.

If so, this might also be the case for “what” and “whatever,” which would literally be pronounced as [hwæt]. Yet, this [æ] realization seems to be confirmed by Franklin’s rhyme of *what* ~ *that*. Nevertheless, he gives another rhyme pairing *what* ~ *not* which can only mean [hwɒt] ~ [nɒt]. This is another bit of evidence showing not only his ability to code-switch, but also to apply his knowledge of dialect and register to facilitate his rhymes when it suits him.

Another apparent example of this use of a lower register in his speech is found in his earliest poem (1719) about Blackbeard the pirate, namely, his rhyme of *quarter* ~ *shorter* (cf. *quorter* ['kwɔrtəɪ] for “quarter,” Plymouth, 1692) which he purposely composed in a fashion he himself described as a “wretched, Grubstreet ballad style,” that is, in the local Boston paritary vernacular with which he must have been intimately familiar. A polite speaker would presumably have realized these words as ['kwærtəɪ] and ['ʃɔrtəɪ ~ ʃɒrtəɪ] respectively. By the mid-19th century, this formerly “vulgar” pronunciation of *quarter*; *wharf*, *war*, etc., with r-loss had become dominant with [ɑ:] as it is today, with r-loss.

3.4 RMS <ee> and <ê>

Table 3: vowel name	/ɛ:/
Table 2: key word(s)	<men>, <lend>, <name>, <lane> (in the 1768 version he gives only “mane” and “lane”)
Table 3: description	1768/1779: “The next, requires the Tongue to be a little more elevated tho the Pipe alone will form them, but not so easily.”

Unlike his examples of *John*, *folly*, and *awl* and *ball* given in the preceding section, where the length of his [ɔ: ~ ɑ:] vowel is not overtly specified,⁹ the first two examples for modern orthographic <e> clearly represent short [ɛ] for **men** [mɛn] and **lend** [lɛnd] while the vowels of **neem** “name” and **leen** “lane” are long [nɛ:m ~ nɛ:m] and [lɛ:n ~ lɛ:n]. As in the case of <o>, Wise (1948, 115) states that Franklin’s [e] is “not the diphthong [eɪ],” a pronunciation which did not become common until the 18th century. I stated previously that I think it is very probable that the older New England [eɪ] of *Wait* words was retained and spread analogically to *Face* words.

9 I concluded in Chapter 24 that it this **aa** is inherently long.

Nevertheless, Wise (1948, 116) assumes the existence of two separate vowels: [ɛ] for its short realization, “[e]” for the long version (i.e. [ɛ:]). He wonders whether:

the sounds were different only in duration or does he [Franklin], following the custom of the times, and for want of theories of the phoneme, merely think duration was the only difference, when actually the two different vowels [e] and [ɛ] were involved.¹⁰

Wise concludes (like Vaughan apparently did before him) that there existed two qualitatively different vowels, [ɛ] and [ɛ:]. Wise’s interpretation is thus that *name* and *lane* represent [lɛ:n] and [nɛ:m], while *men* and *lend* represent [mɛn] and [lɛnd]. This was probably the case for certain English dialects but from what we have seen from Franklin’s, Barlow’s and Dwight’s rhymes, or in the New England town records, this was not case in Massachusetts at this time, where the lower and older [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] vowels were common.

Furthermore, taking his minimal pairs into account, in conjunction with Franklin’s own description of the tongue being “a little more elevated (i.e. than [æ]) tho’ the pipe alone will form them,” implies that both the long and the short variants of this vowel are closer in quality to [ɛ(:)] (once again, possibly closer to mid cardinal [ɛ:]), but not the raised [ɛ(:)] which, as I have previously stated can be easily confused with [ɪ] (as we saw with William Barnes’s Dorset [mɛn] for “men” and Ellis’ interpretation of the same Dorset pronunciation as [mɪn] (Burton; 2010)).

Recall, however, that Benjamin Franklin’s uncle rhymed *frind* “friend” and *attend*, suggesting a raised [ɪ] pronunciation for both. In his RMS, Franklin also transcribes “friend” and get as *frind* and *git*, showing that the *pin-pen* merger must be factored into the equation. The examples provided by the New England town records prove that, without any doubt, this *pin-pen* merger was an inherent feature of Massachusetts phonology (cf. Chapter 17). So, the Massachusetts data on this account may indeed suggest that Wise may have a point with respect to Franklin’s natural 18th-century Boston English where “lane” and “men” would have been pronounced [lɛ:n ~ lɛ:n] ~ [mɪn] and as I have recorded it as far north as Dayton, Ohio. The point here is that the [lɛ:n] ~ [mɛn] are probably part of his idealized model of pronunciation.

It seems to me that Franklin considered <e> and <ee> to be sufficiently similar phonetically to what he heard among polite speakers to merit their sharing the same character. As we have seen, contrary to American English today, he may have perceived vocalic length as “phonemic” as suggested by Wise above.

¹⁰ As pointed out by Wells in his LPD (2005), American linguists tend to not indicate vowel length because they do not consider it to be phonemic. For Franklin, however, it was. See his realization of “edge” and “age.”

Of course, the problem is that there were numerous variant pronunciations of this *Face* (18th-century *Meat*!) phoneme covering the entire phonetic range of potential allophones [ɛ(:) ~ ɐ(:) ~ ɐ(:)]. Quoting Ellis, Wise (1948, 117) presents an interesting argument that implies that his intention for <e> and <ee> was indeed [ɛ] and [ɛ:], writing that Ellis comments blandly (1868, 75) that “Franklin simply gives *men, lend, name, lane* as examples of the same sound, *and that is very nearly the modern practice*’ [Wise’s italics].” By modern practice, Ellis is referring to contemporary English dialectal practice of his day which I interpret to be [ɛ(:) ~ ɐ(:)]. It is still commonly pronounced in this manner in many regions of England.

In Chapter 18, we also studied numerous cases of [ɛ(:)] being lowered to [æ(:)] (*fetch* ~ *fach* (Groton, 1691), *wrestle* ~ *wrassle*, *wreck* ~ *rack* [and *ruin*], *thresh* ~ *thrash*, *leg* ~ *lag*, *keg* ~ *kag*...). The raising of [æ] > [ɛ] was and is common as well: *catch* ~ *ketch*. The only examples I have encountered in his RMS concerns [ɛ] + [ɹ] in “unlearned,” which he spells *unlarn’d* [ʊnˈlæɹnd] and also the possible example of *ðæer*, being a confused transcription of two competing pronunciations: [ðɛɹ] and [ðæɹ].

3.4.1 Examples of Long [ɛ: ~ ɐ:]:

Franklin’s hesitation between *ee* and *ê* to represent [ɛ: ~ ɐ:] is yet another confirmation that his mode of representing vowel length was not quite fixed in his mind. In his transcriptions, Franklin shifts between <ê> and <ee> to represent [ɛ: ~ ɐ:]. <ê> appears in nine words: *sêm* [sɛ:m ~ sɐ:m] “same,” *mêks* [mɛ:ks ~ mɐ:ks] “makes,” *mê* [mɛ: ~ mɐ:] (2 examples) “may,” *atên* [aːtɛ:n ~ aːtɐ:n] “attain,” *ðêr* [ðɛ:ɹ ~ ðɐ:ɹ] “there,” *kûmpêrd* [kəmˈpɛ:ɹd ~ kəmˈpɐ:ɹd] “compared,” *grêt* [gɹɛ:t ~ gɹɐ:t] “great” (2 examples), *grêtûr* [gɹɛ:tɹ ~ gɹɐ:tɹ] (2 examples) “greater,” *rilêfun* [riːlɛ:fən ~ riːlɐ:fən] “relation.” Recall that Lowell spells “greater” *gretter* suggesting a short [ɛ] pronunciation.

Elsewhere, he they chooses to double the vowel of *leet* [lɛ:t ~ lɐ:t] for “late,” *seem* [sɛ:m ~ sɐ:m] for “same,” *week* [mɛ:k ~ mɐ:k] for “make,” *asyrteen* [æsəɹˈtɛ:n ~ æsəɹˈtɐ:n] for “ascertain,” *feer* [fɛ:ɹ ~ fɐ:ɹ] for “share,” *feeks* [fɛ:ks ~ fɐ:ks] for “shakes” (3 examples), *steens* [stɛ:ns ~ stɐ:ns] for “stains,” *ðeer* [ðɛ:ɹ ~ ðɐ:ɹ] for “there” (5 examples), *neev* [nɛ:v ~ nɐ:v] for “knave,” *leet* [lɛ:t ~ lɐ:t] for “late,” *reens* [ɹɛ:ns ~ ɹɐ:ns] “rains,” *eer* [ɛ:ɹ ~ ɐ:ɹ] for “are” (one occurrence) (but 8 occurrences of *er* and, finally, one occurrence of *eedfes* [ɛ:dʒɛz ~ ɐ:dʒɛz] for “ages”). Note that he also transcribes the same word with short <e> in *edfes* [ɛ(:)dʒɛz], also for “ages.” This also suggest that he has rejected the older New England [æi ~ ei] pronunciations of *ascertain, stain, rain*...

The doublets in his transcriptions provide further proof that he had not settled on the use of diacritics or the doubling of the vowel as being the best

method. We see the same word being transcribed two different ways: *mê* ~ *mee* “may,” *mêks* ~ *meek* “make(s),” *sêm* ~ *seem* “same,” *atên* ~ *ateen* “attain,” *ðêr* ~ *ðeer* “there.” In addition to *ðêr* ~ *ðeer*.

As mentioned above, words such as “there,” “care,” “wear,” etc. vacillated between, [ɛ:ɪ] and [æ:ɪ] in New England and, apparently, throughout the colonies where [æ:ɪ] is still common in Appalachia among older speakers. Duponceau (1818) and Krapp (1925) both confirm this point and this [æɪ] realization can still be heard in the Appalachians today.

As noted above, this is in line with his transcription of “unlearned” and there which Franklin realizes as *unlarn’d*, i.e. [ʏn'læɪnd] and *ðæer* another of his frequent lapses in attention owing to a confusion between [ðɛ:ɪ] and [ðæ:ɪ]. Both reveal his natural Boston pronunciation. Compare *unlarn’d* to his centralized transcriptions, following the London fashion, i.e. *lyrn* [læɪn] and *lyrning* [læɪniŋ] (cf. below).

Otherwise, Franklin transcribes all other words with a single <e> which, in theory, should represent a short [ɛ]. One would have expected a number of examples to be doubled and realized with long [ɛ: ~ ɛ:]: *ebil* [ʔɛ(:)bɪl ~ ʔɛ(:)bɪl] for “able,” *kes* [kɛ(:)s ~ kɛ(:)s] for “case” (3 examples), *endfel* [ʔɛ(:)ndʒɛl ~ ʔɛ(:)ndʒɛl] for “angel,” *tfendʒ* [tʃɛ(:)n(d)ʒ ~ tʃɛ(:)n(d)ʒ] for “change,” accompanied by two variants of “changed,” *tfendʒd* [tʃɛ(:)n(d)ʒd ~ tʃɛ(:)n(d)ʒd]. “Craven Street” *Kreven striit* is also indicated with a single <e> [kɹɛ(:)vən stri:t ~ kɹɛ(:)vən stri:t]. Another example is *tfendʒin* (2 occurrences) [tʃɛ(:)n(d)ʒɪŋ ~ tʃɛ(:)n(d)ʒɪŋ] for “changing.” We shall return to the pronunciation of <ing> because, as we saw at the end of Chapter 23, there are many examples going back to the 17th century of spelling, indicating that in natural New England and English pronunciation [ɪn] or syllabic [ŋ], even in polite conversation, was very common.

Finally, the indefinite article “a” is transcribed under its full form *e* fifteen times, which one would also have expected to be pronounced as a long [ɛ(:) ~ ɛ(:)]. Not once does he transcribe it as **y* [ə].

3.4.2 Primary Stress and Secondary Stress: <e> [ɛ]

I have classified short [ɛ] realizations in three categories: in syllables taking primary stress; secondary stress; and zero stress in unstressed syllables (which will be dealt with in Chapter 27).

Primary stress in monosyllables: *spel* [spɛl] “spell” (4 examples), *let* [lɛt] “let,” *er* [ɛɹ] “are” (8 examples), *uel* [uɛl] “well” (5 examples), *huen* [huɛn] “when,” *sens* [sɛns] “sense,” *ðem* [ðɛm] “them” (5 examples), *ðen* [ðɛn] “then.”

Primary stress in disyllables: *spelin* [ˈspɛliŋ] “spelling” (8 examples), *tempests* [ˈtɛmpɛsts] “tempests,” *veriz* [ˈvɛɹɪz] “varies,” *itself* [ɪtˈsɛlf] “itself,” *letyr* [ˈlɛtɹɪ]

“letter,” *nevyr* [ˈnɛvəɪ] “never,” *evyr* [ˈɛvəɪ] “ever,” *hueðyr*¹¹ [ˈhʉɛðəɪ] “whether” (3 examples), *kuestsyn* [ˈkʉɛstʃən] “question,” *present*¹² [ˈpɹɛzɛnt] (7 examples), *sentens* [ˈsɛntɛns] “sentence” (2 examples), *faarget* [ˈfəɪˈɡɛt] “forget,” *atend* [aˈtɛnd] “attend” (2 examples), *riflekts* [ɹiˈflɛkts] “reflects,” *dyirekts* [ˌdɛiˈɹɛkts] “directs.”

Primary stress in polysyllables: *impurfeksyn* [ɪmpəɹˈfɛkʃən] “imperfection” (5 examples), *difendin* [diˈfɛndɪn] “defending,” *rektifyiŋ* [ˈɹɛktɪˌfəi-ɪŋ] “rectifying,” *lezsurli* [ˈlɛʒʉɹli] “leisurely,” *aabdfeksyn* [ˌəbˈdʒɛkʃən] “objection,” *aalredi* [ɒlˈɹɛdi] “already” (3 examples), *sentensez* [ˈsɛntɛnˌsɛz] “sentences,” *attended* [aˈtɛndɛd] “attended” (2 examples). *Several* may either be another example of Franklin lapsing back into traditional orthography or another example of his hypercorrect articulation of each syllable [ˈsɛvɛɹəl] ~ [ˈsɛvɹəl].

Secondary stress in polysyllables: *kaansikuentli* [ˈkɔnsɛˌkʉɛntli] “consequently” (2 examples), *kaantreri* [ˈkɔnˌtɹɛɹi] “contrary,” *etimaalodzi* [ɛˌtɹɪmɔləˌdʒi] “etymology,” *etimaalodziz* [ɛˌtɹɪmɔləˌdʒiz] “etymologies” (3 examples), *etimaalodzists* [ɛˌtɹɪmɔləˌdʒɪsts] “etymologists,” *septembyr* [ˌsɛpˈtɛmbəɪ] “september,” *ekspres* [ɛksˈpɹɛs] “express.”

3.5 RMS <ii> and <i>

Table 1: vowel name	/i:/
Table 2: key word(s)	<did>, <sin>, <deed>, <seen>
Table 3: description	1768/1779: “The next, still a little more.”

Of all the vowel descriptions Franklin provides in his *Reformed Mode of Spelling*, his discussion of <i> and <ii> is the most clearly presented (along with <e> and <ee>). Here too, however, he presents <i> and <ii> as being qualitatively identical, that is, short [i] and long [i:] were variants of the same sound. Other than this, he says little more. This too was seen as a drawback by Vaughan, who believed that Franklin should have used two separate characters to distinguish these sounds but his comment may have concerned his own pronunciation more than Franklin’s.

Nevertheless, Kenrick (1773, 24) also states the same thing as Franklin, asserting that *fit*, *kiss*, *win* “have the same quality, differing from *feet*, *geese* and *ween* only in ‘quantity or time.’” Like Franklin, Kenrick also matches *men* [ɛ] and

11 *hueðer* for “whether” is almost certainly an error. Elsewhere, he correctly transcribes it as *hueðyr*.
12 *prezont* [ˈpɹɛzɔnt] appears to be his attempt to transcribe [ˈpɹɛzənt] with intervocalic /z/.

mane [ɛ:], *not* [ɒ] vs *nought* [ɒ:], *pull* [u] vs *pool* [u:] (cf. below).

We saw that Lass (1999, 88, cf. Chapter 16) argued that the so-called “lax i” /ɪ/ was realized as tense, short [i] until the end of the 17th century. Mazarin (2020, 3, 18) states that the Type B phase of English (ending around 1650) had “six short vowels /ɪ, e, æ, ʌ, ʊ/, most of them probably tenser than their usual modern counterparts.” He goes on to offer a number of examples of rhymes matching [i ~ i:] ~ [i:] by the 17th-century poets Katherine Philips and Lord Wilmot.

Given that Franklin was born in 1706 and that most of his siblings were born during the last quarter of the 17th century back in Northamptonshire, I proposed that Franklin continued to realize it under its tense form in many, but not necessarily in all environments. If we return to his comments at the beginning of his essay, we gain a little more perspective into the matter.

As to the difference between long and short vowels, it is *naturally* (my italics) expressed by a simple vowel where short, a double one where long; as for “mend” write “mend,” but for “remain’d” write “remeen’d.” For “did” write “did,” but for “deed” write “diid,” etc. (Franklin, 1779, 469)

If we interpret these examples literally, “did” and “deed,” “sin” and “seen” should be pronounced as follows: [did] (not [dɪd]) ~ [di:d] and [sin] ~ [si:n]. Indeed, I pointed out in Chapter 16 that Krapp (1925, 113) is perhaps the first to observe that “It may be that the vowel was formerly pronounced with a higher value, approximately [i]. This would make *sin* [sin] a fairly close rime to *seen* [si:n].” Krapp (1925, 187) adds a very perceptive note, writing that “Franklin recognized the difference between the vowel of *did* and the vowel of *deed*, but he says the ‘true sound’ of i is as the vowel in *deed*, and this he seems to regard as the type of sound to which [ɪ ~ i:] should be subordinated” (cf. Chapter 16). Expressed in more modern terms, Krapp believes that Franklin considered that the /i:/ of *deed* should be interpreted as the base form of the short /i/ of *did*. Either way, if Krapp is correct, this means that Franklin believed that *did* could be interpreted as having two allophones, either [ɪ] or [i]. Recall that this is not far from what Barnes describes for Dorset dialect, describing the two allophones as belonging to either “Type 1” or “Type 2” categories (cf. Chapter 16). This also shows that tense short [i] survived well into the 19th century, so why not in 18th-century New England?

The New England poets, including Franklin, also provide late examples matching this tense short [i] and [i:] in their poetry. We also saw many survivals of this in the vernacular or paritary varieties, particularly in southern US English but also in Lancashire: “dish” [di:ʃ], “fish” [fi:ʃ], “wish” [wi:ʃ]. Examples of breaking in words such as “hit” [hɪt ~ hi-ɪt], “did” [dɪd ~ di-ɪd], etc. in southern American English are probably a relic of EME. This could also explain Franklin and Webster’s complaints of the drawling and the “whining,” nasal New England

accent which they condemned.

Given the dialectal complexity that characterized English at the time, Franklin's approach was probably well justified phonemically and, once again, his goal was to reduce the number of characters, not add to them. Furthermore, without fully understanding the concept of the "phoneme," which had not yet been theorized, he intuitively understood that, behind the "one letter for one sound principle," such minor distinctions [ɪ] versus [i] did not risk modifying the meaning of any given word and, therefore, the practicality of such a simplified system amply served the purposes of his reform.

3.5.1 Examples of <ii>

Franklin gives approximately twenty-five examples with doubled <ii> representing [i:]. There are an additional three examples in hiatus. However, unlike <ê>, he never uses the circumflex diacritic <î> to represent [i:]. Starting with monosyllables, these words with doubled <i> are **kliir** "clear" [ki:ɪ], **diir** [di:ɪ] "dear" (3 examples), **miir** [mi:ɪ] "mere," **iitf** [i:tʃ] "each," **riid** [ɹi:d] "read" (3 examples), **pliiz'd** [pli:zd] "pleased," **uiiks** [ui:ks] "weeks" and **striit** [stɹi:t] "street."

Stevenson transcribes "editions" in a way that recalls certain rural American varieties today, **iidifʏns** [i:'diʃəns] "editions"! (But **idifʏns** [i'diʃəns] in her 1768 manuscript letter, cf. Appendix 2.) Other examples with stress on the first syllable are **miinin** [mi:nin] "meaning" and **piipil** [pi:pɪl] "people." Other examples are found in the final stressed syllable: **tfʏiniiz** [tʃɹi'ni:z] "Chinese," **digriis** [di'gɹi:s] "degrees," **biliiv** "believe" [bi'li:v], **bituiin** [bi'tui:n] "between" (two occurrences) and **siriin** [si'ɹi:n] "serene." As we saw in Chapters 16 and 17, this last word is generally pronounced [sɛ'ɹɛ:n] in the poetry of the New Englanders, another sign that his model is founded on London English.

"Easiest" is interesting in that it is the only example with two long <ii> [i:] vowels. Vaughan's 1779 edition has Stevenson transcribing it **iisiiest**, literally [i:ʃi:ɛst]. Yet, just as for "edition" above, she transcribes it **isiiest** in her handwritten 1768 version, that is, [i'ʃi:ɛst],¹³ suggesting the stress is on the second syllable, not the first. Franklin spells "easily" as **izili** [i:'zili] and **inkriisin** [in'kɹi:sin] as "increasing." Note that, in this last example, he never indicates the

13 Note that where one would expect [z], out of respect for Stevenson and Franklin's transcriptions, I use voiced [ʃ] as an equivalent. It is not impossible that, during the 18th century, this /s/ may have had a different phonetic realization than today, making the distinction more difficult to their ears. Looking carefully at his description of the pronunciation of /s/ and /z/, he says that the "tip of the tongue" is "applied first to the roots of the upper teeth" which, literally interpreted may have produced a lisped sound or, if the tongue was slight retroflex, a whistling sound as in older Lancashire English. The people I heard pronouncing it this way were born in the 1890s. Otherwise, the number of these "errors" is suspiciously high.

velarization of /n/ before a velar stop, i.e. [iŋ'kɹi:sɪŋ] and very well may have pronounced it as an apico-alveolar nasal (cf. Chapter 25).

Three examples show <-iɪŋ> in hiatus, that is, disyllabic [i·iɪŋ]: **rektif*u*iɪŋ** ['ɹɛkti,fəi·iɪŋ] (stress pattern: 1020) “rectifying,” **hur*u*ɹ*u*iɪŋ** [hʊɹ.ɹəi·iɪŋ] “hurrying” (more on **hur*u*ɹ*u*iɪŋ** in Chapter 27) and **biɪŋ** ['bi·iɪŋ] “being.” For the [ɹi ~ əi] diphthong in this word, see Chapter 25.

3.5.2 Examples of <i>

In stressed monosyllables, <i> is normally short and, as pointed out above, probably had two allophones: [i ~ ɪ] and, for some speakers, a long, tense [i· ~ i:] in some environments which led to breaking: [i·ɪ]. It the latter “drawled” realizations which Franklin and Webster claim were common in New England and which both men vehemently condemned. Here again, it has only survived in the southern US.

In this part of the presentation, I adopt a traditional interpretation of Franklin’s transcriptions in most of these words, even though the value of some of these words may have still been tense [i], in some environments, short or “lax” [ɪ] may have been preferred: **list** [list ~ li·ɪst?] “list,” **til** [til] “till,” **stil** [stil] (2 examples) “still,” **uil** [uil] (7 examples) “will,” **uiθ** [uiθ] (6 examples) “with,” **git** [git ~ gɪt] “get.” In modern Lancashire dialect, “got” is still pronounced [gi:t] (German, personal notes, Deane, Lancs). Franklin gives **bin** [bin] (2 examples) for “been” (but see his rhymes of “been” with “then,” “in” and “green” as [ɪ ~ ɛ?] in Chapter 17). Dobson (1968, 451) informs us that the orthoepists are almost unanimous in recording the weak form of *been*, i.e. [bm]. Other examples of short <i> are as follows: **if** [ɪf ~ ɪf] “if” (7 examples), **tiz** [tiz] “it is,” **iz** [iz] (15 examples) “is,” **is** literally [is] (2 examples) “is,” **it is** [it is] (3 examples) “it is.” I felt certain that the two examples of *is* [is] and the three examples of “it is” were certainly errors. However, one must not be too hasty in such conclusions because, J. Smith (1674) equates “yeast” [i:st] with *is’t* “is it” [ɪst ~ i·st] (Dobson, 1968, 568). This may reveal one of Franklin’s slips back into his earlier Boston speech.

To conclude this section, **ði** [ðɪ] for “the” (64 occurrences) (with no unstressed **ðy** forms), **ui** [wi] “we” (10 examples) and perhaps **uif** [uɪf ~ uɪf?] “wish” (which Franklin rhymes on one occasion with “fish”) may also have been pronounced with tense [i] (cf. Hall, 1942 and Shorrocks, 1998). Another example is short <i> in **si** [si] “see,” which was almost certainly intended to be pronounced [si:] and thus could have been transcribed as **sii** (cf. his transcription of “seen” above as **siin**). In Chapter 16, we examined the possibility that <ee> spellings may have diphthongized in some varieties on account of Franklin’s rhymes with words having final -y [əi], -ly [ləi], -ity [itəi]. Once again, the discrepancies between the

rhymes of Franklin and the New England poets and Franklin's RMS, suggest that two competing models are in play.

Disyllables and polysyllables in which the <i> receives primary stress: **signifyid** ['signi,fəid] "signified," **sufifent** [sə'fɪfɛnt] "sufficient," **titfin** (2 examples) ['titfɪn] "teaching" (probably with long [i:]), **Iteli** ['itɛli] "Italy," **limpid** ['lɪmpɪd] "limpid," **living** (2 examples) [lɪvɪn] "living" (however, see Franklin's numerous realizations of "to live" as [ləiv] in Chapter 16), **uiθaaout** [uiθəʊt] "without," **iven** "even" ['ivɛn] (probably /i:/), **gilti** "guilty" ['gɪlti], **intu** (2 examples) ['ɪnto] "into," **itself** [ɪt'sɛlf] "itself," **Kensintyn** ['kɛnsɪntən] "Kensington," **riten** [ˈɹɪtən ~ ˈɹɪtn] (4 examples) "written," **similyr** ['sɪmɪləɹ] (a second transcription given as **similar** is certainly due to a lapse in attention), **ridyrs** [ˈɹi:dəɹz] (with long [i:]) "readers," **miryr** ['mɪɹəɹ] "mirror" but **spikyɹ** ['spi:(:kəɹ] "speaker" (probably with [i:]). Note again that *Fleece* words and *Meat* words are all exclusively with [i:] in his RMS, and not one example with New England [ɛ: ~ ɛ̃:].

Secondary stress, disyllables and polysyllables: **etimaalodfists** [ɛti'məlo,dʒɪsts], "etymologists," **Britania** [bɹɪ'tæni·ə] "Britannia," **imadzɪn** [ɪ'mædʒɪn] "imagine," **impurfeksfyn** [ɪmpəɹ'fɛkʃən] "imperfection," **impaəsibil** [ɪm'pəʊsɪbəl] "impossible," **inhabitants** [ɪn'hæbɪtənt] "inhabitant," **intend** [ɪn'tend] "intend," **Italien** [ɪ'tæli·ɛn] "Italian," **teliŋ** [tɛlɪŋ] "telling," **inkaənvinien** [ɪnkə'nvini·ɛns] (3 examples)¹⁴ "inconvenience," **inkaənvinien** [ɪnkə'nvini·ɛns] "inconveniences" (4 examples). Stevenson transcribes "inconveniences" as **inkənviiniensis** [ɪnkən'vi:niənsɛz] in Vaughan's edition showing that the stressed syllable <ven> had a long [i:], a detail that Franklin had neglected. Nevertheless, in the 1768 version, she writes it just as Franklin does, without **ii**.

3.5.3 <i> [i] for <y> [j-]

In many cases where one would expect an initial palatal glide [j-] in Modern English, Franklin replaces it with <i> and, in a few cases, with <e>, which reinforces the hypothesis that he may have considered glides, whether [j-] or [w-] (cf. below), to be signs of sloppy pronunciation. Webster favoured the pronunciation of <w> as <oo> stating that dwell should be pronounced as *dooell* (cf. Chapter 23). This precise [i] pronunciation would have been encouraged for dictation or when students were practicing to read aloud. Furthermore, his decision to replace <y> with <i> is certainly linked to his desire to eliminate redundant or useless characters from the alphabet. In this respect, it follows the same logic as giving <i> /i/ for the [i] and [ɪ] allophones.

Gil (1619), and Cocker (1696) spell "yesterday" *isterday* with initial [i], or

¹⁴ inkənveniēns (1); inkənveniēnsiz (2).

perhaps with a lengthened [i:], [iːstəɪdæi]? In my view, this may be a result of the progressive vowel assimilation of initial [i-] + [ɛ] > [ɪ ~ i-]. *Yes* and *yet* are also given as [ɪs] and [ɪt] by Gil (1619). Newton (1660) also records “yet” as *it* (+ the *pin-pen* merger) showing that initial [j-] had not emerged in his Lincolnshire variety. Likewise, and for the same reason, and as I indicated above, J. Smith (1674) matches “yeast” with *is’t* “is it” (Dobson, 1968, 568). This would imply that “yeast” was already pronounced [i(:)st] (and not [(i)ɛ:st]) and that *is’t* could also be pronounced with raised but shorter [ɪst ~ i-st] with the devoicing of /s/, perhaps a result of assimilation with /t/. The absence of the initial glide /j/ that we observe here is still a feature of both Welsh and Welsh English as spoken by older speakers today (Parry, 1977, 1979, 1999). These are also common in Welsh English dialect literature (cf. Lewis Jones’ *Cwmardy*, 1937) in which “yes” is regularly given as *is* the Rhondda Valleys vernacular.

With regard to Franklin’s pronunciation of initial <i> rather than <y>, Grandgent (1899, 224) comes the closest to the mark. He writes that Franklin probably pronounced “you” as <iû> as in “rustic” New England speech (which appears to be diphthongal [iu:]). While he may be right regarding the long [u:], just as for long [ɔ:], Franklin makes no mention of <u> being long, only rounded. Having said this, his key words, “rule” and “tool,” would appear to be long, even in the Boston vernacular. And yet, we have seen in Chapters 20, 21 and 22 that *doom*, *gloom*, *proof*, *moon*, *hoof*, *roof*, etc. were all realized in Massachusetts as [ʁ ~ ʊ].

There are a fair number of examples in Stevenson and Franklin’s transcriptions where <i>, rather than <y>, appears initially in the following words: **iu** [iu] for “you” (4 examples), **iur** [iuɹ] for “your” (4 examples), **iurz** [iuɹz] for “yours,” **ius** [ius] for “use,” **iusedʃ** [iʊsɛdʒ] for “usage,” **iusles** [iʊs,les], **iuz** [iuz] (vb) for “use,” **iuzɪŋ** [iʊzɪŋ] for “using” and, finally, **iuzed** [sic] [iuzd] for “used.” For examples of C + [i], cf. Chapter 25 and Chapter 28. We saw exactly the same pronunciations in my transcriptions Wilkins’ “Apostles’ Creed” (1668) and in John Hart’s script (1569).

Webster and asserts that <y> is more consonantal than vocalic.

The sound of y in the beginning of words, is, by some writers, called a vowel, but by most of them a consonant. Lowth has asserted, that it has every property of a vowel and not one of a consonant. Sheridan considers y in *youth*, *year*, &c. as the short *ee*.

These testimonies support Franklin’s and Stevenson’s presentation of <y> as a vowel. Nevertheless, Nares (1784, 41) writes:

Dr. Johnson says in his Dictionary (at the letter Y), “Y at the beginning of words, is commonly taken, *though I think erroneously* (his italics) “for a consonant. Ben Jonson also was of this opinion; and says, we might write *iouth*, *ies*, *ioke*, *ionder*,

iard, ielk (i.e. “yolk”) as well as “youth,” “yes,” “yoke,” &c. but that we choose *y* for distinction sake” This remark, indeed, is true but I should rather say that *i*, as well as *y*, assumes the power of a consonant, when united by rapidity of pronunciation to another vowel that follows it...

This last remark is very important. He acknowledges that careful speakers were pronouncing it as a vowel but that, in rapid speech, it was inevitably transformed into a glide. We can assume the same for <w>.

Webster argues leans in favour of the innovative [j] pronunciation, however.

But if these writers would attend to the manner in which we pronounce *yes, ye*, they would acknowlege [sic] that *y* has some property different from *ee*; for it is very evident that they are not pronounced *ee-es, ee-e*. The fact is, that in the American pronunciation of *y*, the root of the tongue is pressed against the upper part of the mouth, above the palate, more closely than it is in pronouncing *ee*, and not so closely as in pronouncing *g* hard. The transition however from *y* to *ee* or to *g*, is extremely easy, and hence the mistake that *y* is short [pg. 88] *ee*, as also the convertibility of *y* with *g*. [J] It appears to me that *y* in the beginning of words, is more clearly a consonant than *w*. (see below)

In careful pronunciation, <y> + back vowels, high or low, were indeed pronounced as suggested by Sheridan and Lowth, that is to say, [iu(:)] in rapid speech, probably as [ju(:)].

Two final examples concern GA/RP /ju/ as in “Europe” or “union.” In the first case, the [j] was clearly absent and would have been pronounced [ʊ(:).ɾɹp ~ ʊ(:) ɶp]. In the second case, Franklin’s [u] realization here is confirmed in his use of the indefinite article “an” in “an union” (cf. “...*an union* with the colonies”; “if such *an union* were now established;” cf. “Franklin to Unknown,” 1776) which he would have realized as [æɪn ʊ(:)niən]. Think also of Francis Lodwick’s “an Universal Alphabet” (1686).

3.6 RMS <u>

Table 1: vowel name	/u:/
Table 2: key word(s)	<tool>, <fool>, <rule>
Table 3: description	1768/1779: “The next, requires the Lips to be gather’d up, leaving a small Opening.”

As was just mentioned above, just as with his <o> character, Franklin makes no comment about the length of this vowel. With regard to the quality of the sound, MacKintosh (1797, quoted by Grandgent 1899, 226) claims that “pull” was pronounced like the /u/ of “poule” in French. If true, Lass’ description of the 17th-century minimal pair, *pool* ~ *pull*, differing only in terms of length but

not quality would seem to indicate that this pronunciation survived in New England speech until the late 18th century (just as tense short ME /i/ [i])]. Note that Kenrick (1773, 24) also claims that “syllables” of *pull*, *wool* and *hood* “are of the same quality, differing only in quantity or time” from *pool*, *noon* and *hoop*. We have seen Kenrick advocating other New England-sounding pronunciations such as [ɛi(:)] for *Price* words and tense [i] for *Kit* words. Given that he was born in Dorset, could it be that his accent was more conservative in certain ways than the speech of true Londoners?

Wise (1948, 118) quoting Franklin’s Scottish contemporary, James Buchanan, states that he grouped “*full*, *push* and *sugar* together as if they had a common character, but he clouds the issue by distinguishing between their vowel and that of *butcher*, *puss*, and *put*. Ellis interprets Buchanan as using [ə], by which Ellis himself, in this case, means [ʌ].” I am not so certain.

Recall David Parry’s transcription of *butcher* as [bʊtʃəɹ] for Gwent, 1999. However, Wise may not have known that Buchanan probably intended the vowels for these words to be [ʌ], as is the case in Scotland for certain *Foot* words, not [ʊ] (Beal, 1999, 136). Wise concludes that “All the modern interpreters of Franklin, from Ellis onward, appear to yield to the belief that Franklin used [u] in both *rule* and *book*. Pending further study, there seems little else to do.” If he pronounced *book* [bu(:)k], it would be close to the realization heard in the Northwest Midlands today, where it is realized as a long [u:] (also *look*, *took*, etc.). If so, we are facing the same dilemma as short tense /i/ versus long tense /i:/ above.

In Chapter 20, we noted examples of the lengthening of orthographic <u> before /f/ in words such as *bush*, *push*, etc. not only in large areas of the US, stretching from southern Ohio (German, personal notes) to North Carolina’s Outer Banks (Wolfram & Schilling, 1997), but also in the Northwest Midlands of England (Shorrocks, 1998) suggesting that this is a shared relic pronunciation in both regions and, hence, part of an older shared English tradition.

As we have seen in Chapters 20, 21 and 22, there is another dimension to this story which relates to history of “New England short u and o” and this may clarify some of the ambiguity here, namely an [ʊ ~ ʊ̃] pronunciation in several subclasses of Wells’ key words. If the analyses in Part III are accurate, the pronunciations proposed by Franklin for each of his proto-phonemic characters of his RMS are not quite the same as those he appears to have used naturally. If this does not elucidate the nature of the quality of this vowel, it may explain why Franklin presents it as being short. Recall the New Englanders’ rhymes of *resume* ~ *doom* ~ *gloom* being pronounced [ʊ̃]. The same may once have been true in Franklin’s natural Boston idiolect as a child, that is, “rules” [ɹʊ̃ls], “book” [bʊ̃k] vs his RMS spellings of **ruls** and **buk**, [ɹul] and [buk] respectively? The shortness of his vowels here may be an echo of his former speech habits.

Nevertheless, in his RMS, Franklin's reference to the "lips" being "gather'd up" reveals that the vowel is significantly rounded. However, this points to [u:] or possibly [u], rather than lax [ʊ]. Although he makes no allusion to it, given his key words, "tool," "fool" and "rule," despite my remark in the preceding paragraph, it is more likely in this context that these examples have a long [u:]. Unfortunately, although short [u] (or even lax [ʊ]) appear counter-intuitive to current GA or RP speakers in these words, this is not a reliable criterion for evaluating the data here, especially given the many surprises we have already encountered in Part III. As with his <ii> and <i>, Franklin's transcribed letters to Mrs. Stevenson seem to indicate a mix of possibilities with variable [u:] ~ [u] realizations. The possibly of lax [ʊ] and [ɪ] in unstressed syllables is very real, however. Part of the difficulty may also stem from the difficulty in distinguishing between vowels that may have been half-long, a challenge for any phonetician, present or past.

3.6.1 Stressed <u> [u(:)], Monosyllables

The exact nature of his transcriptions of words is ambiguous regarding vowel length: **rules** [ɹu(:)lɪʃ] "rules" (2 examples), **tru** [tɹu(:)] "true" (3 examples), **tu** [tu(:)] (8 examples) as opposed to **to** [tɔ] (15 examples), and **intu** ['intu] "into" (2 examples), **hu** [hu(:)] "who" (3 examples), **du** [du(:)] "do" (3 examples), **nu** [nu(:)] "new" (9 examples), **akiuret** ['ækiu,ɹet] "accurate" (by Stevenson; note the glide vowel). We will return to cases of **nu** versus [nju:] and **akiuret** ['ækiu,ɹet] in the next chapter.

Indeed, in Chapter 20, we examined numerous examples of <oo> spellings of *Goose*, *Foot* and *Strut* (*blood*, *flood*) words and saw that Franklin and the New England poets frequently rhymed words such as *blood* ~ *food* ~ *foot*. Grandgent's description of 19th-century Massachusetts English suggests that the *Foot* vowel is as "similar, in a way" to [ʏ] and I have taken this to be a slightly higher [ʏ].

For the sake of argument, the question is whether Franklin realized **buks** "books" (4 examples) as [bu(:)ks] (as in parts of the North of England) or perhaps [bʊks? ~ bɹks?]. Recall the spelling of *buck* [bʊk ~ bɹk] for "book" (Groton, 1683) which also gives *bruck* [bɹʊk ~ bɹɹk] (Groton, 1705) for "brook" and *tuck* [tʊk ~ tɹk] (Plymouth, 1693). All three are quite clearly short vowels on account of final <-ck>. We have seen that Wise (1948, 118) asks this same question regarding "books" and concludes that it may have been a short tense [u]. Other possible examples are **gud** "good" [gu(:)d ~ gud ~ gɹd?], **luk** "look" [lu(:)k ~ lʊk ~ lɹk?], **stud** "stood" [stu(:)d ~ stud ~ stɹd?] and **ɹndyrstud** [ɹndəɹ'stu(:)d ~ ɹndəɹ'stud ~ ɹndəɹ'stɹd?]. All of these realizations existed during the 17th century as well.

Based on the evidence gleaned from the New England poets and other

comparative evidence presented in the preceding chapters, I concluded that the most probable pronunciation of these shortened <oo> words was [ʏ] with a possible lowered variant [ʏ̯], which were able to rhyme with a considerable number of *Strut* words, themselves still also pronounced [ʏ] in New England and parts of the Midlands and East Anglia (cf. Mazarin, 2020). This also appears to be supported by the multiple examples cited in the New England (Massachusetts) town records (Orbeck, 1927).

Another interesting example concerns “bosom,” which Franklin transcribes as *byzym* indicating [bʏzəm] in his natural speech (not [ˈbʌzəm] in London English), but this is to be viewed in the same way as his spellings of “come” as *kym*, “some” as *sym*, etc. (cf. below): [kʏm] and [sʏm] in his RMS as well as in his rhymes.

3.6.2 Initial u [u-] for <w> /w-/

In the same way that Franklin interprets traditional orthographic <y> (as a short [i] rather than as [j], a palatal approximant), he also considers the initial orthographic <w> to be a vowel <u> [u] and not bilabial approximant [w-] (except in rapid speech). For this reason, he eliminates <w> from his alphabet, just as he did <y>, regarding them as superfluous characters. The most perplexing occurrence of this spelling is found in the modal verb “would” which he transcribes as *uuld*, in which <u> is almost always doubled (13 times in his Sept 28th letter) against only three examples of *uld*. On the face of it, one would expect the doubling of <uu> here to represent long [u:ld].

Webster’s precise description of this sound for his native Connecticut.

Under the head of diphthongs we may perhaps range *wa, we, wo, wi, &c.* *W* has nearly the short sound of *oo*; for *will, dwell* are pronounced as if written *ooill, dooell*. It is a controverted point, whether *w* should be classed with the vowels or consonants. I shall only observe, that it is pronounced by opening the mouth, without a contact [Pg 87] of the parts; altho, in a rapid pronunciation, it approaches to a consonant. It is however very immaterial, whether we class it with the vowels or consonants; as all grammarians agree that its sound is that of *oo* short. It ought to be named *oo* or *we*; which would save children much of the trouble they now experience, in learning its proper sound from that awkward name *double u*. (Webster, 1789, 86-87)

However, Webster is perplexed by the pronunciation of <w> + back vowels [ʊ] or [u:]:

Perry has adopted this opinion and contends warmly that *w* is a consonant. If *w* is a vowel, says he, then *wool, wolf*, will be pronounced *oo-ool, oo-olf*, or *ool, olf*. I am sensible that in the beginning of words, *w* has not precisely the power of *oo*; but it is not clear from this fact that it has the properties of a consonant. (Ibid.)

“Would” is transcribed in Welsh orthography as *wld* [uld] in Ieuan ap Hywyl

Swrðwal's "Hymn to the Virgin" (circa 1480), also with retention of the post-vocalic [l] (cf. German, 2000, 2001). Very significant for our discussion, Wright (1905, 684) gives the pronunciation of "would" as [ud] for Worcestershire, Shropshire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire near Wales, but also Bedfordshire, Essex, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Dorset and South Somerset, precisely as Franklin gives it here (but with the elision of [l]). Is this a chance happening? Likewise, Wright (*ibid.*, 684) gives [ud] as the pronunciation of "wood" for Worcestershire, Shropshire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset and Devon. "Woman" (*ibid.*) is given as [umən] in roughly the same regions but also in Suffolk, Essex, Kent, Surrey and Sussex, all areas that supplied a steady stream of settlers to Massachusetts. These are obviously holdovers from an earlier time, and it is clear this feature was also part of the colonial feature pool alongside [w-] pronunciations (see also Upton & Widdowson (1996, Map 18, *Wool* [ul]).¹⁵ To conclude, I estimate that he must have pronounced it as a faint [u ~ ʊ], particularly in careful speech which, once again, was the whole point of his reform, that is, to help the uneducated to acquire a variety of English that would assist them in integrating higher levels of society.

In passing it is thus significant that Shakespeare, a native of Warwickshire, frequently wrote "world" as 'orld, or "woman" as 'oman, etc., probably for the same reason just seen. I have already mentioned that, until recently, Welsh speakers had no [j-] or [w-] glides in their phonemic inventory and, when speaking English, older speakers for whom Welsh was the first language pronounced these [i-] and [u-] (cf. Swrðwal example above) respectively (Parry, 1977, 1979, 1999; Thomas, 1984; Penhallurick, 1991; German, 1996). For example, "yes" was pronounced [is] and "wood" [ud] (as one can see in the loanword *wdcneif* ['ud,kneif] for "wood-knife," an instrument used for shearing sheep that is still used in the Llyn Peninsula in Gwynedd; Parry-Williams, 1923).

As we have just seen for **uuld** "would," Franklin systematically transcribes <u> + <ld> with the retention of postvocalic /l/. This is almost certainly a genuine reflection of his native pronunciation of these words: **fuld** [fuld] "should," **kuld** [kuld] "could" (3 examples). See also his pronunciation of "calm" (Chapter 25). Here again, I would interpret the vowel to be [ɤ].

The safest guess is to take his orthographic <u> as a weakly articulated [u] when in initial position, just suggested by Webster: **uel** [uɛl] "well" (5 examples), **ui** [ui] "we" (10 examples), **uiiks** [ui:ks] "weeks," **uil** [uil] "will" (7 examples), **uif** [uiɸ] "wish," **uiθ** [uiθ] "with" (6 examples), **uiθaaut** [ui'θaʊt] "without." We have already seen examples of <u> + [ɤ] in **uyn** [uɤn] "one" (2 examples) and **uyns** [uɤns] (2 examples). As stated above, this looks very much like an English

15 I was initially unable to obtain access to this book. My sincere thanks to Joan Beal for having furnished me with a copy of this map.

dialectal trait that was carried over to Massachusetts and took root there.

Given the data provided by Wright for huge areas of England, *wool* and *wolf* would have very precisely been pronounced [u(:)l] and [u(:)lf]! In fact, as seen above, *ooill* for “will” and *ooell* for “dwell” pose no problem for Webster but he appears perplexed by Perry’s argument regarding the pronunciation of *wool* and *wolf* (Perry 1775). Walker (1791, xv) confirms this “It is no more than the French diphthong ou. Thus “west” is equivalent to *ouest*, and “wall” to *ouâll*.” Upton and Widdowson (1996) provide modern examples for Worcester, Gloucestershire, Somerset and large parts of Devon.

As we have seen, *ool* [ul] and *oolf* [ulf] are precisely the realizations attested for the West of England in recent times and it appears that this was also the way Franklin pronounced it too. Webster’s dilemma regarding <w> [u-] + [u ~ u] is, in effect, the same as <y> [i] + [i] discussed above (17th-century *isterday* for “yesterday,” *ist* for “yeast”).

Sheridan, in his *General Dictionary of the English Language* (1780, 9), describes <w> and <y> as being pronounced “short oo” and short ee.”

3.6.3 ME /wr-/ as [ur]

We have already discussed Hart’s realization of words like “write” *ureit*, “writing” *ureiting*, “writer” *ureiter*, etc. which appears to be a weakly articulated [u-] (1564). It survived under different forms in parts of Britain until modern times. For instance, Wright (1905, 690) shows that “write” was pronounced [vrɔit] in Somerset, showing a shift from [w] > [v] before /r/ in that county. In southern Scots, [wərit], [wəreit], [wreit] pronunciations were once common. He gives similar pronunciations in the same regions for “wrote,” “wrought,” “wrong,” etc. It does not, however, appear in Franklin’s or Stevenson’s RMS transcriptions.

3.7 RMS <ɥ>

Table 1: vowel name	“uh” /ʌ/: realized by Franklin as [ɤ ~ ə] in his native accent. It appears in words corresponding to New England short u and o (cf. Chapters 16, 21, 22 and Mazarin, 2020, 6, 18)
Table 2: key word(s)	<i>um</i> , <i>un</i> ; as in <i>umbrage</i> , <i>unto</i> & as in <i>er</i>
Table 3: description	1768/1779; “The next, a very short Vowel as in < <u>um</u> brage>, < <u>un</u> to>, &c. the Sound of which we should express in our present Letters thus, <u>uh</u> , a short and not very strong Aspiration.” Note that Franklin spells “ <u>um</u> brage” <i>umbridge</i> in the 1768 version.

Determining the exact value of this character, one of the six that Franklin

designed and had cast at Watts' Printing House in London, has been one of the most difficult riddles to solve, mainly for reasons examined in Chapter 16 and Chapters 20 through 22, namely, questions tied to "New England u and o." As we have seen, this **u** symbol figures among the six characters which he gave to Noah Webster in 1786 and Benjamin Vaughan, his editor, around 1778, obviously hoping the latter would adopt his system.

Initially, like nearly all previous researchers, I believed that this **u** reflected our GA/RP /ʌ/ phoneme, but I began to have serious doubts about this when I realized the overall conservatism of Franklin's Boston/Philadelphia idiolect and sociolect. My doubts were confirmed by deductions based on the rhymes of his poems composed between 1719 and 1757 that were analyzed in the aforementioned chapters, that is, the years previous to his long stay in London where he conceived his alphabet in 1768.

The picture that emerged was entirely different in many respects from the one that I had initially imagined. It is for this reason that I have stepped away from my former analysis and decided on a basic conservative phonetic range for New England as a whole that may have resembled [ʊ ~ ʊ̃ ~ ʏ ~ ʏ̃ ~ ə] as well as more innovative [ʌ] in Connecticut and perhaps elsewhere. I have assumed that the latter pronunciation was becoming dominant in London at the time as well in other regions of the south of England. This may be reinforced by the fact that a large contingent of Essex people formed the founder generation of Connecticut (Fischer 1989). Considering that my working hypothesis throughout this study has been that Franklin's RMS was based on sophisticated London English, his most likely model being Polly Stevenson's Kensington accent, I was faced with the dilemma of selecting her probable /ʌ/ as the phoneme representing <**u**> or, as we concluded in Chapter 22, his native /ʏ/ or /ʏ̃/, which was the pronunciation that was most commonly heard in Massachusetts at the time of his birth until at least the mid-19th century. We saw that Avis (1971) described its presence at the end of the 20th century as phonemic but also "recessive." Indeed, much of the English Midlands preserved a similar pronunciation, recorded by Wright (1905, 17) as [ù] (and especially Norfolk, SED [ʏ ~ ʊ ~ ʌ], Orton & Tilling, 1970, 1971). Before coming to a definitive conclusion, let us investigate what Franklin actually says about his <**u**>.

In Table 3, Franklin repeats the key words he indicates in Table 2, adding "um" and "un." We saw very early in our discussion in Chapter 20 that, for New Englanders, <u> was pronounced in the area of [ʊ ~ ʏ ~ ʏ̃]. To repeat, we recall that Grandgent (1899) and Lowell claimed that /ʌ/ (if that is what his /e/ symbol truly represents to him!) was only heard in Connecticut at that time. Based on his analysis of "whole" and "home" (which he claimed was not *hum* but *hóm*), New England short o ranged between was a slightly lower [ʏ̃], a centralized variant of true mid [ʊ̃] and a only a short step above [ʌ].

The fact that he describes it as “very short” is potentially significant in that, comparatively speaking, it ties in well with our analysis of New England short <u> and short <o>. He may also be suggesting that <a>, <u> and <o>, for which he indicates no vowel length at all, might have been somewhat “longer” than <u>. He adds that it does not have “very strong Aspiration.” He states that it represents the final unstressed final <er> (but also in medial position), which he systematically transcribes as **ur** [əɹ] (except in a few failed attempts in his first July 20, 1768 transcription, cf. Appendix 2). Note also his transcription of final <-tion>, <-sion>, etc. as <**syn**> [ʃən].

Dobson (1968, 245) asserts that Wallis was the first orthoepist to distinguish between what he identifies as /ʌ/ and /ə/ phonemes, although he did not use this term, of course. Thanks to more recent studies, however, we now know that [ɹ] predated the shift to [ʌ] (Wells, 1988, 199; Beal, 1999, 136-137) and it may be that the phoneme Dobson attributes to Wallis was not [ʌ] but rather /ɹ/ (see my transcription of his “Apostles’ Creed,” Chapter 13), or something very close to it. We have seen that Wilkins almost certainly had this [ɹ]. This is the opinion of Mazarin (2020) for Wilkins (1668), Hodges (1644), Lodwick (1686) and Cooper (1688).

Dobson (1968, 242) goes on to state that, in standard contemporary English, [ʌ] and [ə] are viewed as “contextual variants of the one phoneme (/ʌ/ being used in stressed and secondarily stressed syllables, [ə] in unstressed syllables or as the unstressed element of diphthongs [iə], [eə], etc. in *here*, *there*, etc).”

The data accumulated in Part III indicates that Franklin’s natural accent as well as that of Timothy Dwight, of Northampton Massachusetts, (but not necessarily Barlow who was from Connecticut) were characterized by a /ɹ/ phoneme corresponding to *Strut* words and represented by Franklin’s **u**. The allophones or, more perhaps appropriately, the phonetic range included [ʊ ~ ɹ ~ ɻ] and [ʌ] if we included Connecticut and, to be realistic, and even if it was a fringe pronunciation, broad areas of New England including parts of Massachusetts.

In Part III (cf. Chapters 20-22), I also concluded that [ɹ] was the realization of “New England short u” for *Strut* words, *Foot* words and a subclass of shortened *Goose* words. I suggested a slightly lower and centralized [ɻ] vowel for *Goat* and *Lot* words. There were certainly shades of variation depending on the dialect concerned and Franklin almost certainly shared the pronunciation of these [ɹ ~ ɻ] realizations during his youth, even if he may have attempted to amend his Boston accent while in London. Indeed, after decades of living in Philadelphia and London, he may have been capable of attenuating this feature when necessary.

In Chapter 13 and again in Chapters 20-22, I argued that Franklin’s source for this **u** character was borrowed from John Wilkins’ *Essay towards a Real*

Character (1668), whose work he had studied at the age of sixteen. He also must certainly have consulted the work a handful of other 16th- and 17th-century orthoepists going back to Sir Thomas Smith (cf. Chapter 13, Volume I for details). Mazarin (2020: 6) also believes Franklin may have borrowed the symbol from Wilkins. He was close friends of several Welsh speakers including Richard Price (of Llangeinor near Bridgend in Southwest Wales) and Sir William Jones, who spoke Welsh and whose father was a first-language Welsh speaker from Ynys Môn (Anglesey), North Wales (and, in passing, a close friend of Isaac Newton).¹⁶ When he opened his first printing shop in Philadelphia, his first partner in opening his printing shop was a Welshman by the name of Hugh Meridith (Chapter 3). Finally, we have seen that he included proverbs and sayings, written in Welsh without translation in his *Poor Richard's Almanack* (1733-1758). Franklin certainly had heard Welsh spoken by the many North Walian Quakers in Philadelphia and was almost certainly aware of what Welsh <y> sounded like in context. However, it had/has two values, both [ə] and [i ~ i].¹⁷

To repeat once again, Mazarin (2020) interprets Wilkins' **u** to represent [ɤ] (rather than [ʌ ~ ə]) and I have followed him on this when representing Franklin's native pronunciation and when **u** appears in stressed syllables. He also contends that, at the end of the 17th century, Cooper's realization of *Strut* vowels was also [ɤ] (ibid.) and goes on to argue, very convincingly in my view, that Cooper's onset vowel in the *Price* diphthong was also [ɤi]. Given that Franklin was born in 1706, and that Franklin's father's Northamptonshire home was only fifty miles away from Cooper's native North Hertfordshire, it is possible, if not likely, that both regional varieties still shared this [ɤ] realization of *Strut* vowels at the time. Note that this area broadly corresponds to the region where Joseph Wright claims his <ù> pronunciation was common.

These distinctions seem to indicate that Franklin's RMS model, although containing traces of his Boston and Philadelphia linguistic influences (cf. Chapter 28), was orientated by and large, and to the best of his abilities, to producing a phonological model inspired by cultivated London speech. To conclude then, because the most common London realization of *Strut* vowels at the time was

16 Recall that during his first stay in London in 1725 at the age of nineteen, Franklin had sought to meet Newton at Batson's Coffee-house, but the meeting never took place.

17 If we explore the Welsh connection a little further, however, we see that <y> has two principal values, not only [ə] but also [i ~ i]. The first, and the most pertinent for our purposes is [ə]. Some North Walian speakers pronounce it in a way resembling, to my ear at least, slightly rounded French [œ]. I believe this is the older pronunciation of words like *pysgod* "fish," *yma* "here," *dyna* "there." In contemporary Welsh-language teaching manuals, this sound is often associated, for practical pedagogical purposes, with English /ʌ/. The other sound that Welsh <y> can represent is a rather centralized [i], faintly nasal-sounding vowel (also North Walian). It is long in words like *byd* "world," *bys* "finger" and *dyn* "man" and short in *hyn* "this" (masc.) and *grym* "strength." *Cymry* "Welsh people" is pronounced [ˈkəmri ~ ˈkœmri]. I doubt that Franklin would have missed this last point.

probably close to innovative [ʌ], I have classified his proto-phonemic **ʏ** as a phonemic /ʌ/ with [ʊ ~ ʏ ~ ʔ ~ ʌ] as elements of its phonetic range (not quite the same as allophones) because we are dealing with multiple varieties.

My intuitive understanding of Franklin's speech tells me that, in the same way many contemporary North Midlanders and northern Englishmen have phonemic /ʊ/ for their *Strut* words, which is a highly salient characteristic of their speech. In my experience, in cases where English northerners seek to accommodate their accent to the southern model, this /ʊ/ is one of the features they have most difficulty shedding due to their inability to pronounce RP /ʌ/. I believe this was probably Franklin's case. Nevertheless, because the primary objectives of this study were to identify and describe Franklin's idiolect and compare it to his RMS model, which was refined London English, I continue to transcribe his **ʏ** phonemically by /ʌ/ while considering his natural pronunciation of it was most likely [ʏ ~ ʏ ~ ʊ]. When it is unstressed, it has a value of [ə], particularly when subjected to r-colouring [əɹ].

In the first set, **ʏ** appears with primary stress.

ʏs	/ʌs/	"us"
bʏt	/bʌt/	"but" (5 examples)
rʏns	/ɹʌnʃ/	"runs"
rʏfɪŋ	/ɹʌfɪŋ/	"rushing"

3.7.1 RMS <**ʏr**>

The following examples all show the centralization of <ir>, <ear> and <er> spellings which are systematically centralized as **ʏr** in words and syllables with primary stress (see below for analysis). In other words, in the following examples, /r/ is purely vocalic [ɹ: ~ əɹ] which I represent in the traditional way as [əɹ].

sʏr	[səɹ]	"sir"
fʏrst	[fəɹɪst]	"first"
θʏrd	[θəɹd]	"third"
lʏrn	[ləɹn]	"learn" (but consider Franklin's ʏnlarn'd [ɹn'læɹnd])
prɪzʏrv	[pɹɪ'zəɹv]	"preserve"

Other examples of centralization are:

<i>syrvant</i>	[ˈsəɪvənt] [səɪvənt]	“servant”
<i>syrvīs</i>	[ˈsəɪvɪs]	“service”
<i>syrv'maʊnted</i>	[səɪ'maʊntəd]	“surmounted” (2 examples)
<i>dityrmined</i>	[ˌdɪ'təɪmɪnd]	“determined”

Curiously, all of these would have been considered substandard by both cultivated 18th-century Americans and Englishmen at the time. Nares (1784), Webster (1789) and Walker (1791) all call for [ɛɪ] pronunciations in these words. Duponceau (1818) claims that [æɪ] was the general realization of *Girl* and *Mercy* words. There are traces of the Franklin's native [ɛɪ] pronunciation, namely, *perfektlyi* [ˈpɛɪfɛktˌlɔɪ] (initial July 20th letter) which was later corrected to *pyrfektli* as in contemporary English in his final September 28th letter, 1768. “Perform” is also centralized *pyrfærm* [pɛɪ'fɔɪm]. I shall argue in Chapters 27 and 28 that Polly Stevenson may have been the source of this systematic centralization of <er> spellings.

The following three words in this section contain **y** ([ʌ] for [ɤ]) with primary or secondary stress:

<i>yndyrplæuman</i>	[ˈʌndəɪpləʊmæn]	“underploughman”
<i>yndyrstud</i>	[ˈʌndəɪstʊd]	“understand”
<i>ævyrkym</i>	[ˌɒvəɪ'kʌm]	“overcome”

The morpheme/pseudo-morpheme <un-> **yn** takes primary and secondary stress in the following examples:

<i>ynlarn'd</i>	[ˈʌn'læɪnd]	“unlearned”
<i>ynserten</i>	[ˈʌn'sɛɪtən]	“uncertain”
<i>ynles</i>	[ˈʌn'lɛs]	“unless”
<i>yndyr</i>	[ˈʌndəɪ]	“under”

With secondary stress:

<i>difikylt</i>	[ˈdɪfɪkʌlt]	“difficult”
<i>difikylti</i>	[ˈdɪfɪkʌltɪ]	“difficulty” (5 examples)
<i>difikyltis</i>	[ˈdɪfɪkʌltɪs]	“difficulties” (7 examples)

In polysyllables where **yr** [əɪ] takes zero stress and which is often elided in paritary speech:

<i>difurent</i>	[ˈdɪfə.ɪənt] > [ˈdɪf.ɪənt]	“different” (2 examples)
<i>natʃyrali</i>	[ˈnætʃə.ɪrə.li] > [ˈnætʃ.ɪə.li]	“naturally”
<i>impurfekʃən</i>	[ɪmpə.ɪˈfɛkʃən]	“imperfection”

These final examples correspond to the final <er> category that Franklin signals in Table 2 (1779, 470b). He renders all such examples **yr** for <er>, <ur>, <or> spellings in final unstressed syllables and which we interpret to be [əɪ].

<i>bærdyr</i>	[bɔɪdəɪ]	“border”
<i>letyr</i>	[ˈlɛtəɪ]	“letter”
<i>ovyr</i>	[ˈoʊvəɪ]	“over”
<i>spikyrr</i>	[ˈspɪkəɪ]	“speaker”
<i>miryr</i>	[ˈmɪɪəɪ ~ ˈmɪɪəɪ]	“mirror”
<i>latyr</i>	[ˈlætəɪ]	“latter”
<i>nevyr</i>	[ˈnevəɪ]	“never”
<i>ridyrs</i>	[ˈɹɪdəɪz]	“readers”
<i>yndyr</i>	[ˈʌndəɪ]	“under”

In conclusion, as I argued in Chapter 21, and upon examination of the facts, it would appear that the value given in Franklin’s RMS was, in all probability, an attempt to reflect stressed London [ʌ] and unstressed [ə], but which he continued to realize as New England [ɜ ~ ɝ]. Recall, that Malone (1925) opted in favour of /ə/ and not [ʌ], however, probably in part because of these unstressed examples.

This brings us to the end of the first part of our discussion about the vocalic system as presented by Franklin in his RMS. Chapter 27 continues with a presentation of the diphthongs and will be followed by Franklin’s description and my analysis of his consonantal system.

27. Diphthongs and Consonants

Introduction

The first section of this chapter continues the presentation of Franklin's RMS vocalic system by focusing on Franklin's diphthongs. The second section presents a description of the consonantal system. As in Chapter 26, each character of Franklin's RMS is introduced and defined in his own words and is accompanied by linguistic and sociolinguistic interpretation and analysis (my definition of "sociolinguistics" includes the disciplines of "dialectology" and the "sociology of language," cf. Marcellesi et al., 1999).

Section 2 also discusses the ways his reformed alphabet treats prosodic questions, in particular tonic stress and the manner his and Stevenson's transcriptions occasionally reflect their paritary speech. Once again, his occasional lapses in attention and transcription errors reveal important aspects of his native Boston, Philadelphia-influenced English, all of which were identified in Part III. This is the subject of Chapter 28. Although the technical nomenclature used by Franklin is often vague, we have already seen that his approach often reveals his remarkably coherent and advanced phonological understanding of the English vocalic and consonantal system. The organization of his system, as we shall see, speaks for itself.

The third part of this chapter concerns the inconsistencies in Franklin and Stevenson's transcriptions. These data are presented in the form of a "learning curve" showing that the number of errors diminishes as Franklin gains experience in transcribing his own alphabet. What appears to be a manuscript draft letter written by Stevenson on September 26, 1768 (and never before studied linguistically) contains a number of differences in transcriptions with the version printed in Vaughan's 1779 edition (cf. Chapter 25 and Appendices 1 and 2).

I conclude with an analytical overview of Franklin's scientific vision regarding the English phonological system and the manner he implements it.

1. Diphthongs

In Chapter 25, I cited Vaughan who remarks in a footnote that, after describing his *yii* [ɹi: ~ əi:] diphthong in some detail, “The copy from which this is printed, ends in the same abrupt way with the above, followed by a considerable blank space; so that more perhaps was intended to be added by our author. [E.]” (Franklin, 1779, 470). The fact that the manuscript version of his RMS that he sent to Stevenson on July 20, 1768 also stops at this point proves that the notes Franklin gave to Vaughan lacked descriptions of *Wait*, *Choice* or *Mouth* diphthongs. In short, on this specific point, we can no longer assert with confidence that any of his notes were lost in the intervening eleven years (as I had initially thought).

In Chapter 8, I proposed that, as a result of his intense negotiations with the British imperial government to avoid the upcoming war between the American colonies and the motherland, he never found the time to finalize his RMS, and regarding this particular point, to complete his descriptions of the diphthongs or, for that matter, to review and refine his scheme. Equally important, he may have been discouraged by Stevenson’s blunt criticisms of his RMS. However, after receiving a long-lost letter in 1785, a letter Stevenson had posted him ten years previously in 1775, Franklin may well have been encouraged to make another attempt. In this letter she expresses that, upon teaching her children how to read, she had changed her mind about the RMS and was now convinced that Franklin’s spelling reform was indeed a wonderful idea and that, given the illogical nature of modern orthography, it would assist children to read far more quickly.¹ She urged him to use his new-found fame and authority to institute his RMS in the “Empire of America.” When he met Webster the following year, his interest in promoting the RMS was rekindled. Franklin furnished Webster with not only a copy of Vaughan’s 1779 edition but also his personal notes on the subject as well as the six characters he had cast at Watts’ Printing House in London in 1768.

The descriptions of the *Mouth* and *Choice* diphthong are missing from his inventory but the nature of these can be deduced thanks to Franklin and Stevenson’s transcriptions. We shall see that Franklin had a [ɛu] and [ɹu ~ iu] diphthongs following initial /p-/ or /f-/ in words like *pure*, *few* and *furious*.

1 I explained elsewhere that, on account of the Revolutionary War, Stevenson’s letter to Franklin was set aside until well after Great Britain officially recognized the existence of the United States.

1.1 <ɥi> /Δi/ for *Price* Words

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation		Franklin RMS
		Phonetic range				
ME /i:/	Price	Conservative [ɛi ~ æi]?	Innovative [ai~əi~Δi~ɣi]?	Conservative [ɛi] ~ [æi]?	Innovative [əi ~ ɣi]? *[ɔi]	London /Δi/ Boston [ɣi ~ əi]

*[ɔi/ appears only in Franklin's original 1768 vowel and consonant table sent to Polly Stevenson on July 20th and therefore probably reflects a London-influenced pronunciation

The diachronic origins of Franklin's *Price* diphthong from the Middle English period to the 18th century have been discussed in detail in Chapter 16 and Chapter 23. The main point to keep in mind is that the basic phonetic range for the *Price* diphthong among educated New Englanders appears to have been in the vicinity of [ɥi ~ ɥi ~ əi] and for some, at least in Connecticut if not elsewhere, [Δi]. We can say roughly the same for many of their contemporaries in east and southeast of England and London area during the 17th and 18th centuries.

We saw that there was a clear downward progression of the onset vowel from the late Middle English period which looks like this: ME /i:/ > [ɪi] > [ɛi] > [ɛi] > [ɛi] > [æi] > [ai]. It appears that some English dialects developed along these lines without reverting to centralization. If so this would suggest there were two distinct dialectal tendencies. However, with regard to those varieties that reverted to centralization, determining what is innovative and conservative depends on the interpretation of the hypotheses presented in Chapter 16 (see in particular Figure 16.1). If the centralization process began early when the onset vowel was at the [ɛi] stage, then the passage was from [ɛi] > [øi] > [əi] > [ɥi]. I tied this into a parallel shift from [ɛi] > [œi] > [ɜi] > [Δi] which I suggested could have occurred as part of a connected dialectal process.

This would mean, for example, that the [əi] and [ɥi] stages of centralization could potentially be as old or even older than, say, the development of [æi] (presumably at some point during the 16th century if we follow Dobson) in those varieties which followed a strictly downward shift without centralization... The point is that dating such developments is not, to say the least, without risk. So, the interpretations in the table above should be viewed with some caution.

From all the evidence accrued in Part III, it appears quite evident that [ɛi ~ əi] was still the dominant pronunciation in 17th-century Massachusetts. Lass (1999) has come to the same conclusion for southern England. This makes perfect sense in view of Grandgent's conclusion that [æi] was the typical pronunciation of *Price* words in rural Massachusetts at the end of the 19th century while [ai] was most common in urban settings. Here again, the picture appears inescapable

indicating a direct downward shift from [ɛi] > [æi] > [ai] while forms such as [əi], [ɹi] and [ʌi] seem to have been restricted to more prestigious varieties associated with the greater London area. If we view Figure 16.1, the development of [ɔi ~ ɒi] pronunciations would be among the most innovative no matter which of the three hypotheses (a, b, or c) proposed in Chapter 16 applies.

All of this gives us a better perspective of the nature of Franklin's *yi* diphthong, the only diphthong which he describes in detail in his RMS treatise. As stated previously in Chapter 8, in the summer of 1768, Franklin had been completely overwhelmed by his duties as an agent and spokesman for the North American colonies the result being that he never finalized his presentation. However, it cannot be entirely ruled out that the notes that Vaughan had in his possession were incomplete. This is suggested by Vaughan's cryptic reference to Sir Thomas Smith, the founder of English orthoepy. We have already seen, for instance, that Vaughan never had access to Franklin's July 20, 1768 letter to Polly Stevenson or, it would seem, the first versions of his table of vowels and consonants (combining Tables 2 and 3 of the 1779 edition) or all of his "Remarks" made in this 1768 version. Although the 1768 and 1779 versions of his presentation and descriptions of his scheme are nearly identical, there are important, revealing details which shed additional light on Franklin's interpretations of English phonology that are missing.

We have already discussed a number of these differences in Chapter 26. An example of what I mean is seen in the vowel and consonant vowel table that Franklin sent Polly Stevenson on July 20, 1768 (for more detail see Chapter 25, "An Overview of Franklin's RMS"). In this 1768b version he offers not one but two variant pronunciations alluded to above.

What in our common Alphabet is suppos'd the third Vowel, *i*, as we sound it is not a Vowel but a Diphthong, consisting of two of our Vowels join'd, viz. *a* as sounded to be in *all* or *u* as sounded in "unto" and *e*: any one will be senaltered sible [sic]?? of this, who sounds those two Vowels *ae* or *ue* [sic] quick after each other; the Sound begins *aw* or *y* and ends *ee*. The true Sound of the *i* is that we now give to *e* in the words *deed*, *keep*, &c.

Let us examine this passage step by step: "a as sounded to be in *all*" corresponds to [ɒ: ~ ɑ:] and is later indicated in his RMS by his fused "Siamese twin" **aa** character, one of the six he conceived for this project. His choice of the key word "all" is interesting being that it is the only example he transcribes on several occasions as **aaaal**, that is, as [ɒ:l ~ ɑ:l].

As we have seen, this comes quite close to McMahon's (1998, 488) London [ɔ:i] realization and this is precisely what I think Franklin had in mind when he selected this key word. We must keep in mind that, when Franklin put his scheme on paper in the summer of 1768, he had already lived in London for over a decade (minus a two-year stint in America between 1762-1764). This [ɒi]

variant very likely reflects Franklin's first (i.e. 1768) attempt to reproduce what he interpreted to be current London usage. If so, this may be the earliest record of this London pronunciation. For more supporting evidence by MacMahon (1998) regarding this London hypothesis, see the discussion on *Choice* words below and again in Chapter 28, where I take this discussion a step further and propose that, in London in 1768, this [ɔɪ] may not yet have been viewed as appropriate in refined social circles.

For more supporting evidence by MacMahon (1998) regarding this London hypothesis, see the discussion on *Choice* words below and again in Chapter 28, where I take this discussion a step further and propose that, in London in 1768, this [ɔɪ] may not yet have been viewed as appropriate in refined social circles. Recall also that [ɔɪ] was not retained in Vaughan's 1779 edition and one wonders whether Polly Stevenson may have advised Franklin to favour the more prestigious London [Λi ~ əi] variant. Elsewhere I have also evoked the possibility that Vaughan, a Cambridge University graduate, may have also taken the liberty of eliminating it from his vowel table. We have seen that Vaughan makes a few critical remarks, for instance, about the quality of Franklin's depiction of short <i>.

Coming back to his second 1768 description of the *Price* diphthong, the second onset vowel he describes is based on traditional orthographic <u> of *Strut* words which, as we have previously discussed, was most likely [ʊ ~ ʊ̃] or even [u], in 18th century Massachusetts and in his native idiolect. It appears that *Strut* words were already innovative [Λ] in London. Franklin's traditional spellings of <ae> or <ue> are thus, rendered **aa**i and **yi**(i) respectively in his RMS orthography.

This second analysis is largely supported by Franklin's description of the *Price* diphthong in the 1779 edition of the RMS, which is as follows:

What in our common Alphabet is supposed the Third vowel, i, as we found it, as a Diphthong; consisting of two of our vowels joined; [viz]... Anyone will be sensible of this, who sounds those two vowels <ɥi> quick after each other; the sound begins with <ɥ> and ends with <ii>. (Franklin, 1779, 470)

This is the only context in which he presents his *Price* word as **yii** /Λi:/ (Boston [əi: ~ ɹi:]). Elsewhere he and Stevenson write it **yi**. However, since the second element of the diphthong was long, a point to keep in mind is that this potentially could have weakened the onset, hence a [əi] variant must be seriously considered.

To repeat, both his **aa**i and **yi** diphthongs were intended to be representative of London speech, not his own, hence my decision to represent these phonemically as /ɔɪ/ and /Λi/. To conclude this part of the discussion, /ɔɪ/ was not part of Franklin's phonemic inventory for *Price* words. Secondly, he would have most likely pronounced **yi** naturally with a slightly lowered onset such as [ɹɪ] and perhaps [əi]. Given that the Boston [ɹɪ ~ əi] and London [Λi ~ əi]

pronunciations belonged to the centralized southeastern and eastern English varieties described above. Considering their relative similarity, one wonders to what degree this specific pronunciation of Price diphthongs would have been considered “different” by high status Londoners or whether they would have gone unnoticed in normal conversation. Popular London speech obviously already had the [ɒi ~ ɔ:i] variant while rural Massachusettsans were pronouncing it [ɛi] and [æi] as in the northeast Midlands. The general similarity of these kinds of features may help explain the praise of colonial American English by English gentlemen during the 18th century.

I explained in Chapter 16, given that Franklin designed a proto-phonemic system based on London pronunciation, I have rendered his **ʏ** character /ʌ/ to represent Franklin’s RMS transcriptions.

ʏi	/ʌi/	“I” (10 examples)
bʏi	/bʌi/	“by” (5 examples)
mʏi	/mʌi/	“my” (2 examples)
mʏit	/mʌit/	“might” (2 examples)
drʏivs	/dʌiʌivs/	“drives”
fʏind	/fʌind/	“find” (2 examples)
rʏit	/ʌit/	“write”
rʏids	/ʌids/	“rides”
slʏit	/slʌit/	“slight”

Variable stress in polysyllables, representing polite London pronunciation:

hʏrʏiɪŋ	/hʌiɪi-ɪŋ/	“hurrying”
rektiʏiɪŋ	/ɪɛktiʏiɪ-ɪŋ/	“rectifying”
transkrʏibd	/tɹæn'skɹʌibd/	“transcribed”
dʏirekts	/dʌi'ɪɛkts/	“directs”
akuʏir	/æ'kuʌiɪ/	“acquire” (2 examples)
perfectʏi	/pɛɪfektʏi/	“perfectly”
ʏidia	/ʌi'dia/	“idea”
rʏiziŋ	/ɹʌiziŋ/	“rising”
satisʏid	/sætisʏid/	“satisfied”
signiʏid	/signiʏid/	“signified”
ʏiðʏr	/ʌiðəɹ/	“either”

With regard to Franklin's transcription of "either," Grandgent (1899, 208, quoting Webster), writes that the /'Λiðəɪ/ variant is proof that Franklin retained at least certain aspects of his original Boston idiom.

...but as Franklin went to Philadelphia in 1723, one may at first be inclined to doubt the purity of his Boston accent. He had, however, at least one trait that (according to Webster) was peculiar to the East – the pronunciation *eiðəɪ* for *iðər* = "either"; and he had, as far as we can tell, no characteristic that was foreign to his birthplace. It should be added that in his day Boston and Philadelphia were linguistically far closer together than they are now.

For the reasons explained in Part III, this last claim is something of an exaggeration. Notice his [*eiðəɪ*] (i.e. /Λiðəɪ/) here. Rather than contradicting Grandgent's statement about its inexistence in Massachusetts, on the contrary, this seems to reveal Webster's Connecticut origins. Nevertheless, Grandgent claims he is following Webster who was from Hartford, Connecticut. According to Grandgent and Lowell, Connecticuters had this [Λ] vowel, but not Massachusettsans. The following examples are stressed on the last syllable:

<i>bisʏidz</i>	/bi'sΛidz/	"besides"
<i>divʏin</i>	/di'vΛin/	"devine"
<i>rifʏins</i>	/ri'fΛin(z)/	"refines"
<i>riʏi</i>	/ri'lΛi/	"rely"
<i>dʃʏʌi</i>	/dʒu'lΛi/	"July"

Recall that Orbeck (1927) states that he found no trace of an [ai] variant in the 17th-century Massachusetts town records. Kenrick (1773, vi) provides evidence regarding the pronunciation of English diphthongs writing the "diphthongal or double (vowels)." Kenrick presents the *Price* diphthong as follows: *i* or *y* in *hire*, *lyre*; *u* in *lure*; *ow* in *town* and *oi* in *joy*. With reference to the latter, he adds that

most of which long sounds seem to partake of two qualities, not so equally blended in them all, as to pass without our perceiving the ingredients of the compound. Thus *I* or *Y* appear to be a commixture of the *long e* (of "*mate*") (my italics) and short *i* (of "*hit*"); *U* of the *long e* (of "*mate*") and short *u* (of "*pull*"); *OW* of the short *o* (of "*not*") and long *u* (of "*pool*"); and *OI* most palpably of the short *o* (of "*not*") and *i* (of "*hit*").

Depending on the quality of his *Price* words, a strict interpretation of his pronunciation of *I* or *Y* would appear to be [ɛ:ɪ ~ ε:ɪ] for *hire* and *lyre*, for instance, [hɛ:ɪ] and [lɛ:ɪ]. Paradoxically, perhaps, this is the pronunciation which Lass (1999, 81-83) asserts was dominant in England during the first half of the 17th century. One would have expected [əi] at this time as described by

Franklin and as argued by Dobson (1968). On page 41 of this same book, Kenrick adds the possibility of a variant [ai] pronunciation (probably [æi]) alongside [ei] (cf. Chapter 23 for a more complete discussion of Kenrick’s *Price* vowel. Nevertheless, despite its conservatism, I take his [ei] realization, which is the pronunciation he gives first and defines with the greatest clarity, to be his personal preference, or perhaps, his own pronunciation. His realization of *lure*, *town* and *toy* are [ɛu:], [ɒu] and [ɔi] respectively. Within Kenrick’s system there was no chance of rhyming *Price* and *Choice* words.

To conclude this discussion, Vaughan wrote a note after Franklin’s description of the *Price* diphthong on page 470, that this description was followed by a blank section in which, as Vaughan surmised, Franklin had intended to add the descriptions of the other diphthongs. For the reasons explained in Chapter 8 regarding Franklin’s dispiriting struggles and futile attempts to make the arguments in favour of the American cause heard by the members of the King’s Privy Council and House of Lords, he never returned to the task of terminating his RMS project.

The descriptions of the rest of the diphthongs that follow are based on deductions made from the transcriptions of the three letters exchanged between Franklin and Stevenson as well as Franklin’s transcription of Addison’s poem entitled “The Campaign” dedicated to Lord Marborough’s victory at Blenheim in 1704. Data obtained from the analyses of the rhyme schemes of the New England poets and their English contemporaries help fill the gaps and provide helpful supplementary evidence.

1.2 < ααɪ > for /ɔi/: *Choice* Words²

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston Pronunciation		Franklin RMS
		Phonetic range				
ME /ɔi/ ~ /ui/	Choice/ Boil	Conservative [ui~ɔi~ɔi~ɹi]	Innovative [əi ~ Δi]	Conservative	Innovative [ɹi ~ əi]	/əi ~ ɹi/ [ɒi]=London

Vaughan (1779, 470, cf. footnote) writes that Franklin had “abruptly ended” his description of *ɪi* and left a large empty space on the page, presumably with the intent of filling it in with more detailed descriptions of the diphthongs. The nature of these diphthongs can thus only be deduced from the transcriptions provided by the correspondence between Stevenson and Franklin.

Unlike his precise definition of the *Price* diphthong words, Franklin gives no description whatsoever for the *Choice* diphthong or, as mentioned in the

2 Cf. Chapter 16.

introduction to this chapter, *Mouth* or *Wait* words. In the case of the *Wait* vowel, we have seen repeatedly that Franklin demonstrates in his rhymes and consistently in the RMS, it had been reduced to an [ɛ:] monophthong. There were nevertheless a number of rhymes that allowed the possibility of an [ei] diphthong. If so, he may have been playing with his knowledge of idiom and register (cf. Chapter 10).

I have mentioned on several occasions in Part III (Chapter 23) that, quite extraordinarily, there is only one *Choice* word in the entire RMS corpus of 443 words, namely, *destracaiid*. This transcription highlights a rather unlikely *acaii* triphthong. He transcribes this word in the same manner not once but twice. Today it would be pronounced [dɪs'tɹɔɪd] in both RP and GA, but Franklin's muddled transcription seems to suggest the telescoping of two competing forms: *yi* [dɪs'tɹɔɪd ~ dɪs'tɹæɪd] and *acai* - [dɛs'tɹæɪd], the first being a reflection of his own Boston English and the second possibly a reflection of London English (cf. Chapter 23). We have seen that a second London variant existed that was close to his Boston realization, [ɹi]. This was probably Stevenson's pronunciation of it. This London [ɹi ~ ɔi] interpretation is supported by Walker's account of *Choice* diphthongs, which he describes being pronounced as in French <âi>: "The diphthong oi or oy is composed of the French â and i ; thus "toy" and "boy" would be exactly expressed to a Frenchman by writing them *tâi* and *bâi*." He also transcribes "joy" as *djâi* (Walker, 1791, xv). Literally transcribed, this would mean [tɑ(:)i] "toy" and [dʒɑ(:)i] "joy" but, as I have explained previously, to the English ear, French /ɑ(:)/ may have been reinterpreted and associated with Proto-RP /ɔ:/ . Having said this, the Americans and the English associate this sound with French [ɑ:], not current RP [ɔ:].

MacMahon (1998, 464) cites evidence for a London [ɔ:i] diphthong which is not too distant. Given Franklin's slightly lower first element, his London-type [ɔi] seems to be very close if not identical to Walker's representation. Furthermore, there is reason why *acai* his transcription would not have consisted of a long onset vowel, [ɔ:i]. This contrasts markedly with Franklin's own New England [ɹi ~ əi]. For this reason, I consider Franklin and Walker's renditions are too similar to be accidental and this seems to be further evidence that Franklin may indeed have been vacillating with regard to the exact transcription of London pronunciation of *Choice* words.

In Chapter 23, the large volume of evidence obtained from Franklin, Barlow, Dwight and Lowell's rhymes demonstrated that words like *boil* ~ *bile* and *toil* ~ *tile* were homonyms, all of which I interpreted in that context to be [ɹi ~ əi] (and perhaps [ɹi] for Barlow, a Connecticut man like Webster).

Indeed, one of the most important revelations in the manuscript version of Franklin's tables and "Remarks" of 1768 cited above (cf. Chapter 26), is his diphthongal [ɔi] realization of *Price* words, which vanishes from Vaughan's 1779 edition. Only *yi* [ɹi ~ əi] is retained in the second version. I speculated that Polly

Stevenson might have encouraged the use of the slightly more presitigious [ʌi ~ əi] variants for not only *Price* but also for *Choice* words. They may have considered the distinction between her [ʌi] and his [ʔi] to have been too insignificant to imagine the need for another character. Furthermore, during the 1760s, this centralized pronunciation may have been perceived to be more stylish. We shall see that, according to MacMahon, the [oi] pronunciation described by Kenrick above gained in popularity in London by the end of the century. Based on these observations and his rhyme schemes, the likelihood is very high that the phonetic range for Franklin's *Choice* words and *Price* words were in the vicinity of [ʔi ~ əi] in his disparitary register. Nares (1784, 74), however, criticizes this pronunciation:

Those who are zealous for the harmony of our language, have lamented that this sound has been in danger of being lost, by a corrupt and vicious mode of pronunciation. It has been, indeed, the custom to give to this diphthong, in several words, the improper sound of i long; as in *boil, broil, choir, join, joint, point, poison, spoil*. The banished diphthong seems at length to be upon its return; for there are many who are slow, hardly enough to pronounce *boil* exactly as they do *toil*, and *join* like *coin*, &c.

To complicate matters further, we also saw in Chapter 23 that Orbeck (1927) cites another string of examples of “appointment” with <wi> spellings, suggesting an [ui] pronunciation in 17th-century Massachusetts: *apwinted* [æ'puinted ~ æ'pwinted?] (Watertown, 1672) and *apwintted* “appointed” (Watertown, 1673), *apwinting* for “appointing” (Watertown 1674), *appwint* (Watertown, 1674), *apwointed* (Watertown 1678). *Booyes* is also given for “boys.” Orbeck (1927, 58) stresses that all of these last examples above are “by the same scribe” and “reflect a labialization,” hence [wi] or [ui]. Furthermore, quoting Wyld, he gives the form *apwoynted* (from the Cely Papers), “which reflects Essex speech in the latter part of the fifteenth century.” Orbeck adds that the scribe responsible for these forms in the Watertown Records came with his parents from Essex. Another example from the same source is *booyes* [buiz] for “boys” (Watertown 1673) which appears to reinforce this [ui] interpretation (Orbeck, 1927). That Nares claims to have heard these pronunciations in England around 1784 is also striking. The fact that Leith (1895) spells “boy” as *bwy* in her novel, *A Plant of Lemon Verbena, A Somersetshire Idyll* shows the tenacity of such variants cross-dialectally (cf. Chapter 23 for Dobson's interpretation of these [ui] pronunciations).

Keeping these last examples in mind, in Franklin's heretofore missing July 20th 1768 letter, he transcribed “Chinese” as *tfuiniiz*, which I very initially interpreted to be [tʃui'ni:z]. However, given that this was his initial attempt at transcription, it dawned on me that this <u> was in fact a lapse into traditional orthography. The <u>, in fact, is the traditional “New England short u” discussed in Chapters 20 and 23, that is, none other than our [ʔ] vowel. The word “Chinese”

later reappears in his September 28th letter in which he corrects his original transcription to *tfyiniiz* [tʃɪ'ni:z]. We saw that, in the discussion on *Price* in the table he sent to Polly Stevenson in July 1768, Franklin spells the diphthong <ue> (i.e. *yi*) rather than stating that <u> (i.e. *y*) has the same value as the vowel of “unto” followed by “The true sound of the i is that we now give to e (his *ii*, IPA [i:]) in the words *deed*, *keep*, etc,” that is to say, *yii* [ɪi:]... (Franklin, 1768).

In her first September 26th 1768 draft letter to Franklin, Stevenson makes the same kind of error as Franklin by confusing orthographic <u> for the RMS <y> in the word *difikulti* which Franklin later transcribed as *difikulti* in his September 26th letter published in Vaughan’s edition (Franklin, 1779, 472).

Nares (1784, 73-74) provides an interesting observation in this regard.

Dr. Wallis informs us, that in his time: some persons pronounced *boil* is if written *bwoile*, Grammar, p. 41. I have heard this pronunciation myself; it is an imitation of the French oi; but is, in my opinion, highly improper. Upon the same principles *boy* has been called *bwoy* (Note, p. 83. of this book); but why *pot* should be pronounced *pwot*, as the same author tells us, is not easily guessed.

The only objection to giving the true sound to *oi* in *join*, is that it is so constantly rhymed to *fine*, *line*, and the like, by our best poets. (Nares, 1784, 73-74)

If I am not mistaken, Nares is not referring to modern French [wa ~ ua] of *bois*, *toi*, *roi* which, at that time, was pronounced [wɛ ~ uɛ] and certainly not [ɔi ~ ɔi]. I am not quite certain which French sound he is imagining here.

For Nares, the “true sound” of *oi* appears to be [ɔi ~ ɔi] while *Price* words should be realized with [Δi]. However, his last remark concerning the rhymes of *Choice* and *Price* words is highly instructive and suggests that Franklin’s natural [ɪi ~ əi] pronunciation may have been regarded as provincial by cultivated Londoners of the time. We must conclude that this diphthong was only one of several competing variants in the feature pool.

Writing a decade earlier than Nares, Kenrick (1773, 24) implies that the “quality and quantity” of *Choice* and *Price* diphthongs were not the same. He writes that *joy*, *toy* and *boy* were “long and broad” while *high*, *die*, *try* and *fie* were “long and slender.” I take his reference to “long and broad” (open?) to refer to the onset, which may mean “low” [ɔ:ɪ ~ ɒ:ɪ?], while “slender” (close?) could be a means of describing his [ɛ:ɪ] realization (Kenrick, 1773, 24), the latter being composed of the “long e” of “mate” and the “short i” of “hit” (ibid.). Yet, Kenrick (1773, 41) provides another description of the pronunciation of *Price* words which he compares to French *aïe* [ai]. We have what appear to be very different variants, one very conservative [ɛ(:)i] and the other innovative [a(:)i]. I have proposed that this implies the existence of an intermediate [æi].

My conclusion in Chapter 23 was that, in Franklin’s day, New England *Choice* and *Price* words were both predominantly realized as [ɪi ~ əi] by educated

Massachusettsans. Older speakers born in the 17th century, as well as the less educated, may have continued to use the [ɛi] variant in both *Price* and *Choice* words.

The onset of [ɛi] in *Price* words was gradually lowered to [æi] (Grandgent, 1899) and then to [ai] in urban areas. The earlier [ɛi] variant is still heard today in the Northwest Midlands of England in place of RP /ɔi/. Shorrocks (1998, 265) provides contemporary evidence for Lancashire: *oil* [ɛiəl], *joiner* ['dʒɛmə], *noise* [nɛɪz], *poison* ['pɛɪzn], *soil* [sɛiəl], *boil* [bɛiəl], *boy* [bɛɪ], *join* [dʒɛɪ], etc. Burton (2010, 107) gives a slightly lower front [æi] realization: [næɪz] for “noise” and [væɪs] for “voice” for Dorset. An [æi ~ ɛi] pronunciation may thus lurk behind Orbeck’s *apaintment* [æ'pɛɪntmənt ~ æ'pæɪntmənt?] for “appointment” (Groton, 1664). In general terms, Grandgent (1899, 228) supports this observation by stating that “the confusion of <ai> and <oi>, which has now become very vulgar, was extremely prevalent throughout the 18th century” (cf. Chapter 23, for more discussion on this matter).

I shall conclude with Nares’ description of what he considers the proper realization of this diphthong to be.

It may be observed, that this sound of oi and oy, rich as it is, and jealously as it may be our interest to preserve it, is composed rather of the sound of au, or broad a and i, than of o and i : whence it happens, that *sawyer* rhymes accurately to *employer*, *lawyer* to *destroyer*, &c. (Nares, 1784, 122)

Previously, Nares, like Walker, equates the sound of <aw> to French â. This can only be [ai ~ ɔi] which MacMahon (1998, 403) interprets as [ɔ(:)i] (perhaps based on RP [ɔ:] for <aw>). This is identical to what Walker’s description (1791, xv). In all cases, and as we have seen, these competing realizations probably explain Franklin’s hybrid transcription of “destroyed” **destraaiid** which, as we have seen previously, confused to competing pronunciations. In all likelihood, he may initially have believed that **destraaid** [dɛs'tɹaid ~ dɛs'tɹaid] was the most representative London pronunciation for his RMS (as proposed by Nares (1784)), but later concluded, perhaps on the advice of Stevenson and his own New England code, that the **destryid** [dɛs'tɹid] realization was more appropriate and in line with his *Price* words (i.e. London /**Δi**/ corresponding to his own [bɪ ~ ɹi], which he appears to have judged to be more refined).

1.3 <ai> /ɛ:/ for Wait Words

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool” Phonetic range		Franklin’s Boston pronunciation		Franklin RMS
ME /i:/	Wait	Conservative [æi ~ ɛi]	Innovative [ɛ:]	Conservative [ɛi]	Innovative [ɛ:]	/ɛ:/

Orbeck's study provides ample proof that *Wait* words were not only still pronounced [ei] in New England during the 17th century but that [ei] was the dominant pronunciation throughout most of the century and probably into the 18th century. I have argued that an [æi] very likely was heard alongside it. Furthermore, these were occasionally confused with *Price* words in New England, the dominant pronunciation of which was also [ei] during the first century of settlement. Orbeck gives the example of "highways" being spelt *hay ways* which suggests ['hɛi,weiz ~ 'hæi,wæi] (Watertown, 1662), *trayangle* ['tɹɛi,æŋɡɫ ~ 'tɹæi,æŋɡɫ] (Dedham, 1650), *assaynes* [æ'seinz ~ æ'sæinz] "assigns" (Watertown, 1653)... I also evoked the possibility that this [æi] variant was heard among conservative speakers, some born in England during the late 16th century. Mazarin (2020, 2) associates this older pronunciation with the 16th-century type-A phase. Nevertheless, Barnes pronounced words such as *day*, *fay* and *way* with both [ɛ:] and [æi] in the middle of the 19th century (Burton, 2010, 83). To give an idea of the kinds of variant pronunciations which existed until recently, I haphazardly selected the word "clay" and noted the variant pronunciations as recorded in the SED for Derbyshire and Cheshire of which I cite only a handful: [klɛ:], [tlɛ:], [tlɛi], [klɪi], [klɛ:], [klɛi], [klæi] (Orton & Barry, *West Midland*, Pt. II, 1970, 378-379). If [æi] pronunciations were common in 19th and 20th century England, why could they not have survived in Massachusetts in the 17th and 18th centuries? There can be no doubt that similar realizations were brought to America and were part of the feature pool during the first hundred years of settlement and probably long afterwards. The "sharedness principle" and sociolinguistic pressures from the mesolect were the determining factors in the process of natural or, perhaps more accurately, social selection.

In his RMS, however, Franklin systematically realizes *Wait* words as [ɛ(:)] which Mazarin (2020, 1) indicates was first documented in popular, i.e. "vulgar" London speech by Bellot in 1586. Here again, nowhere do we encounter the Massachusetts [ei] or [æi] pronunciations in Franklin's RMS transcriptions. Once again, this reinforces the hypothesis that he was following the London mode of pronunciation. Nevertheless, [ɛ:], [ei] and [æi] pronunciations were part of the phonetic range in 17th-century Boston and all three variants probably survived into the 18th century.

In the RMS, however, all traditional <ai> and <ay> spellings are rendered as innovative London <ee> or <ê> [ɛ: ~ ɛ̃]: *asurteen* [æsəɹtɛ:n ~ æsəɹtɛ̃:n] "ascertain," *atên* [a'tɛ:n ~ a'tɛ̃:n] "attain," *dêli*¹ [dɛ:li ~ dɛ̃:li] "daily," *feer* [fɛ:ɹ ~ fɛ̃:ɹ] "fair," *reens* [ɹɛ:nʃ ~ ɹɛ̃:nʃ] "rains," *steens* [stɛ:nʃ ~ stɛ̃:nʃ] "stains," *ue* [uɛ(:) ~ uɛ̃(:)] "way" and *mee* or *mê* [mɛ: ~ mɛ̃:] "may." In unstressed syllables <ai> is also given as reduced short [ɛ] or [əɪ]: *unserten* [ʊn'sɛɹtɛn ~ ʊn'sɛ̃ɹtɛn] "uncertain," *vilen* ['vɪlɛn ~ 'vɪlən] "villain." For possible [ei] realizations in Franklin's in rhymes involving <ay> and <ai> words, see Chapter 18.

1.4 <aau>/<aaou> /ʊ/ for Mouth Words

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England “feature pool”		Franklin’s Boston Pronunciation		Franklin RMS
		Phonetic range				
ME /i:/	Mouth	Conservative [ɔu ~ ɾu]	Innovative [au ~ æu ~ ɛu?]	Conservative [ɔu ~ ɾu ~ əu]	Innovative	/ʊ/

Unlike his precise definition of the *Price* diphthong, Franklin gives no description whatsoever for the *Mouth* diphthong. Dobson (1968, 683-686) sees ME /u:/ evolving to [əu] by the end of the 16th century and “beyond any doubt” was pronounced [Λu] by Wallis, Wilkins and Cooper. Mazarin (2020, 6) proposes [ɾi] for these same orthoepists and I have recorded [ɾu] in Wilkins’ “Apostles’ Creed” (1668). In Chapter 23, on the other hand, recall that Orbeck’s evidence demonstrates that the dominant pronunciation of ME /i:/ in 17th-century Massachusetts was [ɛi] (Orbeck, 1927; cf. Chapter 16). If one adopts the logic of a parallel and symmetrical development of ME /u:/, one might have expected this *Mouth* vowel to have been pronounced [ɔu] in early New England, with later centralization of the first element to [ɔu ~ Λu]. In fact, this is precisely what Lass (1999, 85) proposes. The movement from [ɔu] > [Λu] would thus have been a natural shift. The later passage from [Λu] to [au] would have been equally plausible. However, movement from a slightly higher [ɔu] > [ɾu] would seem to have been equally possible.

However, we saw in Chapter 23 that *Mouth* words were already [au] in the 17th century. Isaac Newton, who was from Lincolnshire, compared it to French <aou>. In that case, the shift from [Λu] to [au] may have occurred symmetrically in parallel with the shift from [Λi] to [ai], but one can imagine that this change was initially restricted to a handful of dialects.

From [au] it was presumably raised to [æu] and then to [ɛu] in New England... This certainly occurred in eastern England and the East Midlands (cf. the SED data presented in the discussion of ME /u:/ in Chapter 20). We have seen that [æu ~ æə] is the dominant pronunciation in Appalachia and much of the American South today.

Nevertheless, centralized [ɾu ~ əu] may have been the more prestigious pronunciation in New England and it was shared by both Franklin and Webster [æu] being apparently more widespread in the rural Massachusetts hinterland and, for that reason, considered “vulgar.” Furthermore, the [əu] realization persisted well into the late 20th century in scattered areas of Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island (Wise, 1948, 118). It is the same diphthong depicted by Labov in his landmark article on the English of Martha’s Vineyard,

Massachusetts in which he also transcribed as [əɪ] and [əu] (Labov, 1963, 1972). Indeed, as noted on multiple occasions, variants of [əu] are recorded in modern North American varieties stretching from the Ottawa Valley, Newfoundland, Martha's Vineyard down to the Tidewater regions of Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina.

In his article entitled "Some Eastern Virginia Pronunciation Features," E. Bagby Atwood (1971, 259) gives "house" [həʊs] for house for the Tidewater area. The source is evidently southern and western England which also share variant forms of this diphthong. As noted previously, I recall older speakers in Tidewater, Virginia at the end of the 1960s pronouncing *about*, *out* with a short, clipped onset vowel resembling [øu], to my ear, almost resembling a monophthong. Newly arrived from Massachusetts, it was one of the most striking things that I recall hearing (along with [b] for [v] in words like [ˈsɛbm̩] for "seven," [ˈlɛbm̩] "eleven" or [ˈdū-d̩n̩] for "doesn't," etc.).

If Franklin's natural pronunciation was [ɹu ~ əu], nowhere in the RMS do either he or Stevenson record *Mouth* words as *yu* [ɹu ~ əu], but rather *au* and *ao*, which I have interpreted as [ɹu ~ əu] and, perhaps, [ɹɔ ~ əɔ] respectively (cf. Chapter 23). The latter *ao* realization **only** appears only three words: *flaor*³ "flower," *daon* "down" and *saaond* "sound." This last word is realized as *saaund* on three other occasions. Note that this diphthong + /r/ (<ower> and <our> words) often gives [ɹɔ:ɪ] in the southern American vernacular: "flower" [flɔ:ɪ ~ ˈflɔ:ə], "our" [ɹɔ:ɪ ~ ɹɔ:ə]... I have shown elsewhere that this was indeed Franklin's natural pronunciation and this is confirmed by his rhymes of *flow'r* ~ *store*, *power* ~ *adore*, etc. Walker's description of this sound appears to be identical.

The diphthongs *ou* and *ow*, when sounded like *ou*, are composed of the French â and the diphthong *ou* ; and the English sounds of "thou" and "now" may be expressed to a Frenchman by spelling them *thâou* and *nâou*. (Walker, 1791, xv)

Because /ɒ(:)/ and /ɑ(:)/ were still phonemic for many New Englanders during the early 20th century, I have opted for a slightly higher /ɒ(:)/ interpretation of the *Lot* phoneme, although my impression is that confusion between the two was probably common long before the 19th century. In other words, the quality and quantity of *Lot* and *Taught* were identical for many speakers probably going back to the 18th century.

By far the most common transcription of this diphthong is *au*. This is the only spelling given by Stevenson.

3 In a discussion with Professor Jean Le Dû (University of Western Brittany, CRBC), he asked me whether Franklin's pronunciation of "flower" was monosyllabic or disyllabic. As we see, there were probably several disyllabic realizations that Franklin used but monosyllabic [flɔ:ɪ] cannot be ruled out in the 18th-century vernacular. It is indeed monosyllabic in some Appalachian English and among Northwest Midlands English speakers.

<i>acourselves</i> [sic]	[ˌɔɹˈsɛlvʃ]	“ourselves”
<i>acur</i>	[ɔɹ]	“our”
<i>adacau</i>	[ɔˈlɔu]	“allow”
<i>surmacounted</i>	[səɹˈmaʊntɛd]	“surmounted”
<i>sacounds</i> [sic]	[sɔʊndʃ]	“sounds”
<i>θacuzands</i>	[ˈθɔʊzændz]	“thousands”
<i>nacau</i>	[nɔu]	“now”
<i>placauman</i>	[ˈplɔʊmæn]	“ploughman”
<i>uiθacaut</i>	[uiˈθɔʊt]	“without”
<i>pronacouns</i>	[pɹɔˈnɔʊnʃ]	“pronounce”

Taking into account the subtleties regarding the precise value of the /ɔ/ phoneme, I interpret the first element to have been phonetically [ɔ ~ ɔ]. His confusion between <o> and <u> as the second element of the diphthong poses the question of whether he imagined this second element to be high [ɔ]. Regardless, he and Polly settled on *acau* which leaves us with either [ɔu] and an [au] variant.

MacMahon (1998, 466-467) cites later observations by Ellis (1836, 136) that the pronunciation of this diphthong was still [əu] in London during the first half of the 19th century. However, he adds:

In IPA notation, Sweet’s vowel would have been [ɔu]. Martin’s suggestion that the better notation would be /ɔʊ/ (“with a very short quantity of ɔ”) (Martin, 1889, 83) could be taken as a confirmation of the still rounded quality of (at least some) pronunciations of the diphthong.

If so, Martin’s analysis sounds very much like the clipped, unrounded French [ɔ] that I have described on a number of occasions previously and which in no way resembles rounded and backed RP [ɔ:]. If so, this would imply to me that this London diphthong might have had variants close to [əu ~ ɔu] and we have seen that this was almost certainly Polly Stevenson’s realization of it. I have argued in Chapter 23 that [ɹu ~ əu] was probably Franklin’s natural Boston pronunciation of *Mouth* words (cf. the rhymes matching *low* ~ *now*, both probably realized by him as [ɹu]).

By the end of the century, it appears that this /ɔu ~ əu/ realization of *Mouth* words may have been considered less stylish in London. This may also explain its fall from grace in Massachusetts. Support for this comes from MacMahon (ibid.) who quotes evidence from Elphinston (1765, 13-14) stating that the diphthong of “how” or “loud” was no longer [ɔu] in the late 18th century but rather [ɔ:] + [u]. This seems to confirm that there was a sociolinguistic struggle in London for dominance between these two pronunciations with [ɔu] and [əu]. Less prestigious pronunciation at the time were probably [au] and [æu] in rural

regions of the East Midlands and the American colonies.

There is no doubt that the starting-point was still open-mid and this diphthong was still unrounded: “*āū* in *house* with length distributed over both elements and the glide between them.” (Sweet to Storm, 24 Sept. 1888, quoted in MacMahon, 1998, 466)

This oscillation between [ʌu ~ əu] and MacMahon’s [ɔ:u] (or my [ɒ(:)u]) could run parallel to Franklin’s description of *Price* words proposed in the 1768 table he sent to Polly Stevenson (cf. Chapter 25), that is, consisting of two variant forms, [ɹi] and [ɒ(:)i]. It also extends to the vacillation between [ɒi] and [ɹi ~ ʌi ~ əi] in *Choice* words. Recall that Franklin, under his “Remarks” heading, in the earliest 1768 manuscript presentation of his vowel and consonant system, describes the first element of the latter realization of *Price* words as being pronounced like “all.” In both versions of his alphabet, he represents this sound with his fused <aa> character which represents [ɒ: ~ ʌ:], just as he and Stevenson do for *Mouth* words. The examples are abundant. Could this [ɒu ~ əu] realization stem from Stevenson’s Kensington, London accent? Given that she was thirty-three years younger than Franklin (1739-1795), it is entirely possible that she advocated what was becoming the more stylish pronunciation. This may be the explanation for this [ɹi ~ əi] vs [ɒ(:)u] imbalance in his system.

MacMahon (1998, 466) cites Walker (1791, 36), who states that the *Mouth* diphthong is composed of the “<a> of ‘ball’ and the <oo> in ‘woo’.” However, MacMahon (ibid., 403, 409) assumes here that the older pronunciation of <all> in *ball* was [ɔ:], as in contemporary RP. I have cited Mazarin’s argument on a good number of occasions that RP /ɔ:/ was first introduced to the RP phonemic inventory by Daniel Jones in his 1917 edition and is due to the late 19th-century raising of [ɒ:] to [ɔ:] (Mazarin, 2020, 14). This is wholly consistent with both the 17th- and 18th-century American and English evidence examined in Parts III and IV. Dobson (1968) contends that *Taught* words were realized as [ʌ: ~ ɒ:] going back to Wallis and Wilkins.

The constant references by Kenrick (1773), Nares (1784), Walker (1791), MacKintosh (1797), Duponceau (1818), Grandgent (1899) and Krapp (1925) to French realizations of *pâte*, *âge*, *âme*, etc., to refer to *Taught* words and *Ball* words can only, if taken literally, be interpreted as [ʌ:] but, as I have suggested above, may have been interpreted by many Englishmen and Americans as slightly lower [ɒ:]. Mazarin (2020) argues that American [ʌ:] preserves the oldest realization of *Taught* words. Nevertheless, the vacillation between these two vowels explains the instability of their phonemic equivalents.

To conclude, if this analysis holds water, from a sociolinguistic perspective, it points to a significant shift in pronunciation away from [əu ~ ʌu] towards the [ɒu ~ əu] diphthong in London, a sound change that appears to have been underway during the 1760s among polite speakers. The fact that, in both America

and England, /au/ came to be the model for both RP and GA, demonstrates other changes were operating simultaneously, probably inspired by pre-existing [au] realizations that perhaps coincided with a shift from [Λu] to [au] as proposed by Dobson (1968). The feature pool in the London area spanning a few generations of the 18th century would thus have included [Λu ~ ʁu ~ əu ~ ɔu ~ ɒu]. In regions of America and the East Midlands, [æu ~ ɛu] variants were also developing (cf. Chapters 15 and 23).

2. RMS Consonant System

In this section, I have followed the presentation Franklin gives in his three charts, as well as his accompanying descriptions and explanations. I have combined the data from both the extant 1768 manuscript version (cf. Appendix 2) and the printed version published in Vaughan’s 1779 edition (Appendix 1). This provides us with excellent insight into his methodological approach. Each consonant is accompanied by my analysis of his observations and remarks.

As we saw in Chapter 26 and we shall see in the conclusion to this section, Franklin had worked out a clear scientific framework for his scheme, demonstrating he had a clear understanding of articulatory phonetics for the time. As with the vowels, he begins with what he considers the “natural order,” that is, the consonant realized at the very back of the throat, namely, voiceless glottal fricative [h], and, from there, he works his way forward, ending with two bilabial stops and a bilabial nasal /m/. Although he may have been inspired by Wallis and Wilkins to some degree, I believe this scheme of presentation results from his own analysis.

2.1 RMS <h> for /h/

Table 1: consonant name	“huh” [hə]
Table 2: key word(s)	“hunter,” “happy”
Table 1: description	1768: “a stronger or more forcible Aspiration” (i.e. he is comparing it to “uh” [ʁ]) 1779: the description of <h> is lacking here
Table 3: description	“a stronger or more forcible Asperation” [sic].

By this he means the voiceless glottal fricative [h] which demonstrates that in 18th-century America it was fully sounded in stressed position, as it still is today. Franklin, as we would expect, includes <h> wherever it is etymologically justified. This suggests that widespread h-loss in the vernacular (and r-loss) in England is a relatively recent phenomenon.

2.1.1 [hw-] > [w-]

Dobson (1968, 974) signals the loss of aspiration in words with <wh> starting in the 12th century onward, a tendency that was prevalent in the South and Southeast of England. This was the dominant pronunciation in vulgar London English. The majority of orthoepists, including Gil, Wallis, Wilkins, Cooper, etc. advocated this conservative [hw-] pronunciation and, although Grandgent (1899, 235) claims that the Massachusetts pronunciation of <wh> was [u-], and not [hu-]. Yet, Franklin and Webster systematically transcribes [ʍ] (i.e. [hw]), as **hu-** ([hu-] in his and Webster's case). Just as for affricates, Franklin believed this as a consonant cluster, which explains its absence from his consonant table.

The influence of these orthoepists probably explains why Franklin and Webster insist on its pronunciation in his scheme despite the fact that it was largely absent in 18th-century New England and London English. Franklin and Webster must have felt that this older usage represented a "purer" form of English that corresponded to the "golden age" of the English language. Webster (1789, 121) gives a clear explanation that confirms the defence of this pronunciation.

There are many people who omit the aspirate in most words which begin with *wh* as *white*, *whip*, etc. which they pronounce *wite*, *wip*. To such it is necessary only to observe, that in the pure English pronunciation, both in Great Britain and New England, for it is exactly the same in both, *h* is not silent in a single word beginning with *wh*. In this point our standard authors differ; two of them aspirating the whole of these words, and three, marking *h* in most of them as mute. But the omission of *h* seems to be a foreign corruption; for in America, it is not known among the unmixed descendants of the English. Sheridan has here given the true English pronunciation. In this class of words, *w* is silent in four only, with their derivatives 3 viz...

Webster's comments directly contradict Grandgent (1899, 235) who quotes Lowell as declaring that:

The Yankee "omits altogether" the "h in such words as *while*, *when*, *where*." This practice has almost died out in New England, even among the uneducated. It is still to be found, however, in Salem and Gloucester... In the words *whoa*! And *why*! The use of *w* for *hw* is common everywhere, and *wəf* [i.e. *wɒf*] for *wharf* is usual in seaport towns.

Webster and Franklin's defence of the older pronunciation may also be a sign of linguistic insecurity (cf. Chapter 25). As a consequence, this could just as well be an example of hypercorrection so typical of recent members of the middle class.

Franklin's **u** realization of [hu] was certainly the result of the careful, deliberate pronunciation he reserved for it alphabet although, then as now, it was most likely pronounced [(h)w] in informal, quickly articulated connected speech. I also showed in Part III (Chapter 23) that [hw-] is still a quite common

pronunciation of many North American varieties today. For example, older native-born Virginians I have interviewed still pronounce it in all positions, even medially, in words such as “overwhelmed.” Likewise, this pronunciation was apparently prevalent in many 18th-century sources.

“Who” is rendered by Franklin as **hu** [hu(:)], a pronunciation which Dobson (1968, 461-462) points out was shared by Gil. All of Franklin’s **hu-** spellings for modern orthographic <wh> were intended to be pronounced, slowly and deliberately, for instance, **huat** “what” as [huæt] but one can assume that in natural (paritary) connected speech it was already realized as [hwæt]. In one of Franklin poems studied in Part III, he rhymes *what* ~ *that* which seems to confirm that the vowel of both words was indeed [æ] in this case. In another poem, however, he rhymes *what* ~ *not* suggesting that he accepted a lowered counterpart, realized as [hwɒt] ~ [nɒt], when it suited the rhyme, unless it was realized as [huɹt] ~ nɹt] ([nɹt] having been attested in contemporary Norfolk). Likewise, he also transcribes “whatever” as **huatever** [huætɛvəɹ].

This shows once again that he probably mastered several registers of English and it did not faze him to switch from one to another. Presumably, it did not shock his readers either. For the purposes of his RMS, the preferred pronunciation in this environment was the more conservative [hwæt] (Chapter 19).

Other examples are in careful and rapid speech, **huen** [huɛn ~ hwɛn] “when” (5 examples), **huitf** [huitf ~ hwɪtf] “which” (3 examples), **hueðɹ** [ʰueðəɹ ~ ʰweðəɹ] “whether” (3 examples), **huil** [hui(:)ɪ ~ hwi(:)ɪ] “wheel,” **huɹil** [huɹɪl] “while,” **huɹluɪnd** [huɹɪl,ɪnd] “whirlwind” (rather than [ʰueɹɪ,ɪnd] and **huol** [huɒl ~ hwɒl] “whole,” as opposed to contemporary GA /hɔ:l ~ houɪ/ or RP /həʊl/). “Whole” is the key word given by Grandgent to represent his New England short o, [hɹɪ]. Notice that he does not transcribe it as [huɹl].

We have already seen that “whole,” **huol**, is one of the key words cited by all of those who have studied “New England short o.” Grandgent (1899: 217) proposes “whole” ~ “hole” as a minimal pair with the realization of /hɹɪ/ ~ /hɔ:l/. It is probable that Franklin, in his Boston idiolect, would also have pronounced as [hɹɪ] but in his RMS as [huɒl], as indicated above. Lowell spells it *hol*. The [hu-] of **huol** is clearly a hypercorrection for what should be **hol**, or even better, **hɹl** [hɹɪ ~ hɹɪl]. In this case, his transcription violates both London and New England popular usage.

2.2 RMS <g> for /g/

Table 1: consonant name	“gi” [gi]
Table 2: key word(s)	“give,” “gather”

Table 1: description /k/ and /g/	“Then coming to those formed by the roof of the tongue next to the windpipe” 1768 table lacks description of /k/ & /g/
Table 3: description /g/ only	“The first Consonant, being form’d by the Root of the Tongue, this is the present hard g.”

His treatment of *g* is straightforward given that there is no other symbol which can also produce this voiced velar occlusive [g]. As we shall see in the discussion of *ŋ* [ŋ], it is not quite clear whether he pronounced [g] following [ŋ] for <ng> spellings. Note his transcription of “English,” for instance, which he transcribes as *Ingliſ* (July 20th letter). His /g/ has been totally assimilated by the velar nasal (see his spelling of *laanger* [ˈlɒŋgɐ] rather than *laangyr* below).

The question, however, is whether he considered the symbol [ŋ] to include [ŋg] as in “finger” or the [ŋ] of “singer.” In Lancashire, for instance, singer is pronounced [sɪŋgɐ]. I found no examples in his transcribed RMS corpus other than English where [g] appears medially after [ŋ]. Furthermore, all other examples of [ŋ] occur word-finally as in <ing> and, at least in contemporary RP and GA are pronounced [ŋ]. No attempt is made to state that the consonant is voiced, or in his terminology, “full,” “thick” or “dull.”

2.3 RMS <k> for /k/

Table 1: consonant name	“ki” [ki]
Table 2: key word(s)	“keep,” “kick”
Table 1: definition /k, g/	1779: “Then coming to those formed by the roof of the tongue next to the windpipe.” 1768 table lacks a description of /k/ & /g/
Table 3: description /k/ alone	“a kindred Sound, a little more acute, to be us’d instead of the hard c.”

Here he is referring to the voiceless velar occlusive [k]. Likewise, Franklin makes no reference it being “thin” (i.e. voiceless) in this case. He makes it clear that this character should replace the “hard c” of “case,” “cane,” “clear,” etc. because <c> can also be pronounce /s/ as in “cease,” “civil,” “scene,” etc. Although he does not mention it, his <k> also replaces “hard” <ch> in “chemical,” “character,” “choir,” etc. Webster (1789) does make this point, however proposing, “Therefore *character*, *chorus*, *cholic*, *architecture*, should be written *karacter*, *korus*, *kolic*, *arkitecture*; and were they thus written, no person could mistake their true pronunciation.” As can be seen from his examples, he does not fully apply this rule to either *karacter* or *kolic* which, according to his system, should be *karakter* and *kolik*. Franklin, however, applies this rule systematically in all of his transcriptions.

2.4 RMS <*ʃ> for /ʃ/

Table 1: consonant name	“ish”
Table 2: key word(s)	(sh) “ship,” “wish”
Table 1: description 1768 version : /ŋ, ʃ/	The description of /ŋ/ is absent from Table 1 (1779); 1768: “Then coming forward to those form’d by the Root of the Tongue next to the Windpipe” (cf. Chapter 26)
Table 3: description /ʃ/ alone	“a new Letter, wanted in our Language, our <i>sh</i> , separately taken, not being proper Elements of the Sound.”

Here too Franklin eliminates the digraph <sh> to represent this sound and proposes an h-looking symbol to represent the voiceless palato-alveolar fricative /ʃ/. Given its resemblance to <h>, for the sake of clarity, when presenting Franklin’s RMS script, I have replaced it with the IPA symbol /ʃ/, hence the asterisk here.

Franklin provides no voiced /ʒ/ version of /ʃ/ which leaves a hole in his system. He interprets it as being a “French” sound but, paradoxically, he represents it as a digraph, *zʃ*. To his ear it must have sounded like a cross between voiced [z] and the palato-alveolar sound of [ʃ]. The key word he gives for it is French *zʃame* [ʒa.mɛ] “jamais.”⁴ Here Franklin violates the logic of his own system, however, (i.e. one letter for one sound) and he would have done better to invent another character corresponding to the IPA symbol [ʒ]. Furthermore, it would also have permitted him to indicate the voiced affricate [dʒ] with more accuracy. He must thus have interpreted this “French” [ʒ] to be an affricate *zʃ* which he would have classified along with *tʃ* /tʃ/, *dʃ* /dʒ/ and *hu* /hu/. Kenrick (1773, vi) also uses the <zh> digraph to transcribe [ʒ] in *hosier*, *occasion*, *measure* and *leisure* but this is clearly on analogy with <sh> [ʃ].

Franklin’s use of <*zʃ*> is the single most striking error in his system (cf. Abercrombie’s comments on Franklin’s lack of judgement (cf. Chapter 25, Abercrombie, 1981)). Having said this, just as with /s/ and /z/, it is not impossible that there was some fluctuation in the use of /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ in the 17th and 18th centuries. In Chapter 23, for instance, we saw that the 17th-century Massachusetts clerks had difficulty spelling “division” and “provision” which may mean that, at least in these positions and in selected words, the [ʃ] pronunciation may have resulted from an older [si.ən ~ sʲən] > [ʃən].

As a reminder, I have reproduced Orbeck’s examples here: *deuishan* [dɛˈvɪʃən] for “division” (Groton, 1678), *diuishen* [diˈvɪʃən] “division” (Dedham, 1661),

4 As Wise (1948) points out, if he is respecting French pronunciation, his <a> cannot represent [æ] here but rather [a]. This should perhaps kept in mind in transcriptions in which his <a> is followed by /r/ for instance.

devisonall [dɛ'vɪsənəl?] (Dedham, 1661) (Orbeck, 1927, 69), *deuishans* [dɛ'vɪʃəns] (Groton, 1686) (ibid., 79), *prouison* [pɹə'vɪsən?] for “provision” (Groton, 1666) (Orbeck, 1927, 69), as well as *prouishan* [pɹə'vɪʃən ~ pɹə'vɪʃən] (Groton, 1691), *prouishone* [pɹə'vɪʃən ~ pɹə'vɪʃən] (Groton, 1693) (ibid., 79). In his RMS, Franklin systematically spells <-sion>, <-tion>, etc. as ***fun*** [ʃən] (see below).

2.5 RMS <ŋ> for /ŋ/

Table 2: consonant name	“ing” [ɪŋ]
Table 2: key word(s)	(ng), “ing,” “reaping,” “among”
Table 1: description 1768 version : /ŋ, ʃ/	A description of /ŋ/ is absent from Table 1 (1779); 1768: “Then coming forward to those form’d by the Root of the Tongue next to the Windpipe” (cf. Chapter 26)
Table 3: description /ŋ/ only	“a new Letter, wanted for the among same Reason; these are form’d back in the Mouth”

In the 1768 table sent to Stevenson, Franklin lumps “ish” <ʃ> and “ing” <ɪŋ>” together, concentrating on the palato-alveolar nature of /ʃ/ and the velar quality of /ŋ/, the common link between them in his mind being that, in the case of /ʃ/, for instance, the surface of the tongue rises, but does not quite touch the palate. Regarding /ŋ/, the back of the tongue presses against the rearmost region of the “soft palate” or “velum.” As he puts it, they are both produced “Then coming forward to those form’d by the Root of the Tongue next to the Windpipe.” Could it be that Franklin pronounced /ʃ/ as a laminal (i.e. front part of the tongue behind the tip) post-alveolar articulation? We have seen that Franklin describes his pronunciation of /θ/ and /ð/ as apico-alveolar fricatives with the tongue nearly touching the roots of the upper teeth rather than being strictly dental.

Bizarrely perhaps, Franklin describes both [ŋ] and [ʃ] as dorso-palatal consonants and combines them in the 1768 manuscript sent to Polly Stevenson. The symbol he devised to represent this voiced velar nasal resembles, in a surprising way, the modern voiced velar nasal consonant [ŋ] of the IPA but, as indicated in Chapter 23, both he and the designers of the IPA were probably modelling this on the Greek equivalent. Note too that Franklin systematically transcribes *-ing* as ***in*** [ɪŋ] and never as ***in*** [ɪn] which was the dominant pronunciation in the local Boston vernacular (cf. Lowell’s *Biglow Papers*) (cf. the section of Chapter 23).

As indicated by both Angus (1935, 66) and Wise (1948, 114), Franklin does not transcribe [ŋ] before either /k/ or /g/ when these occur medially. For this reason, he transcribes ***laanger*** [ˈlɒŋgəɪ] rather than ***laangyr*** as well as ***inkaænveniens*** “inconvenience” and ***inkaænveniensiz*** (2 examples) rather

than *in̩kaənveniens(iz)*. Stevenson spells *in̩kaənviininiens* with <ii>. It is not impossible that Franklin truly pronounced it [in̩kən'veniens]. Again, these transcriptions of polysyllabic words were intended to be pronounced distinctly while reading aloud: [ʔn̩ 'kən 'vi:n 'i 'ɛns]. One can almost see and hear Franklin and Stevenson slowly pronouncing he syllable as they are writing them (see his instructions to the trustees of the Philadelphia Academy regarding his “English School” and the need for the pupils to read aloud before a qualified instructor, Chapter 14). Notice his awkward transcription of “thing” *θin̩ŋ* [θin̩]. Here he seems to consider /n/ and /ŋ/ as a consonant cluster which, of course, is impossible.

As noted above for traditional <ng> spellings, in this corpus, we only encounter <ng> twice, in *langued̩f* [ʔlænguəd̩f] and *laenger* [ʔlɒŋgəɪ]. I can only assume that he pronounced words like *In̩lif* as [ʔin̩lɪf] and not as [ʔɪŋglɪf] as in RP or GA. One of the more awkward transcriptions in his July 20th letter is *θin̩ŋs* (2 examples) for “things.” Otherwise, only three examples show <ng> [ŋ] following a back vowel as in *am̩ŋ* for [a'mɒŋ] “among,” *alaŋ* [a'lɒŋ] “along” and *lon̩* “long” which is perhaps a slip for **laŋ* [lɒŋ] or an unconscious lapse into New England [lɒŋ ~ lɔŋ?] (cf. Chapters 22 and 28).

All other examples appear before <ing>: *biin̩* [ʔbi-in̩] (in hiatus) “being,” *brin̩* [bɪn̩] “bring,” *brin̩ŋ* [ʔbrɪn̩ŋ] “bringing,” *ryit̩ŋ* [ʔrɪt̩ŋ] “writing” (3 examples), *Kensin̩tyn* [ʔkɛnsɪn̩tən] “Kensington,” *miin̩ŋ* [ʔmi:n̩ŋ] “meaning” (2 examples) *akaard̩ŋ* [a'kɔɹd̩ŋ] “according,” *hury̩ŋ* [ʔhɹɹæi-in̩] “hurrying,” *inkriis̩ŋ* [in̩'kri:siŋ] “increasing,” *iuz̩ŋ* [ʔiuz̩ŋ] “using,” *spel̩ŋ* [ʔspeliŋ] “spelling” (8 occurrences). Note that Dwight observes that, in New England and English, the general pronunciation of -ing was [ɪn ~ ɹ̩]. This is also reflected in the Massachusetts town records of the 17th century.

2.6 RMS <n> for /n/

Table 1: consonant name	“en” [ɛn]
Table 2: key word(s)	“end”
Table 1: description /*r, n, t, d/	1768/1779: “Then to those, formed more forward, by the forepart of the tongue against the roof of the mouth”
Table 3: description /n/ only	“form’d more forward in the Mouth, the Tip of the Tongue to the Roof of the Mouth.”

Here <n> refers to the voiced apico-alveolar nasal [n]. When <n> appears before apico-alveolar stops, bilabial and velar stops, Franklin treats it as an “archiphoneme,” /N/. In other words, his character <n> is the underlying form in his transcriptions of words being in the following environments:

/-N/ + /p-/ & /b-/ ([np] > [mp] / [mb])

/-N/ + /t-/ & /d-/ ([nt] > [nt] / [nd/])

/-N/ + /k/ & /g-/ ([nk] > [ŋk] / [ŋ] / [ŋg])

We have seen that /n/ followed by velar /g/ is fused into a velar nasal /ŋ/. See Stevenson's transcriptions of **distinkʃyn** [dis'tɪŋkʃən] "distinction" and **inkaə nviiniensis** [ɪŋkən'vi:ni:ɛns ~ ɪŋkən'vi:ni:ɛns] "inconvenience," **θink** [θɪŋk] "think" and Franklin's own transcription of "distinction" **distinkʃyn** [dis'tɪŋkʃən] (2 occurrences). With regard to "inconvenience and" "increasing," spelt **inkaənveniens** [sic] [ɪŋkən'veniens?] and "increasing" **inkriisin** [ɪn'kɹi:siŋ ~ ɪŋ'kɹi:siŋ], both Stevenson and Franklin may have wished the pronunciation of this in- prefix in such contexts to be rendered as literally as possible in disparitary speech. Above, we saw a botched attempt by Franklin to transcribe "thing" as **θinj** [θɪŋ] in his July 20th letter (rather than **θinj**).

2.7 RMS <r> for /ɹ/

Table 1: consonant name	"ar" /æɹ/; Sheridan pronounces it [ɛɹ]
Table 2: key word(s)	"art"
Table 1: description /*r, n, t, d/	1768/1779: "formed more forward, by the forepart of the tongue against the roof of the mouth" (p. 468 of his reform)
Table 3: description /r/ only	<r> : "the same." the Tip of the Tongue a <i>little looser or separate from the Roof of the Mouth</i> (my italics), and vibrating." The 1768 version of this table does not mention "and vibrating."

As we can see here, Franklin quite exceptionally gives what initially appear to be two separate descriptions of /r/. Claude Wise (1948, 118-119) puts it very succinctly: "Franklin does not mince words in making it clear that his [r] is a tongue-point trill, 'the tip of the tongue a little looser or separate from the roof of the mouth, *and vibrating*.'" It is important to point out, however, that Wise did not have access to the table Franklin sent to Stevenson in July 1768 in which we read only "the tip of the tongue a little looser *or separate from the roof of the mouth*." The phrase "and vibrating" was added later in Vaughan's 1779 edition.

The question is whether: "and vibrating" was included at Franklin's request (perhaps in the form of a letter sent by Franklin between 1776-1778 while in Passy or did Vaughan take it upon himself to add this detail? Should "vibrating" be taken literally as the vibration of the tongue against the alveolar ridge?

In the first case, I believe it is likely that this mention of "vibrating" was indeed Franklin's decision. Nevertheless, the fact that Franklin classifies his character <r> along with <n>, <t> and <d> followed by <l> in Table 1 (p. 468) gives the

initial, but false, impression that Franklin imagined /r/ to be an apico-alveolar trill or flap (i.e. given that /n/, /t/, /d/, /l/ are all apico-alveolar). Wise is convinced that /r/ is a trill or flap in all positions adding “Franklin must have trilled even the postvocalic r” and gives “murmur” [ˈmɑrmɑr] as an example (Wise, 1948, 119). He does so under good authority. After all, although Wise does not quote them, Dobson (1968, 945) notes that Wallis, Wilkins, Newton, Holder and Cooper all describe a trilled realization of /r/ and Dobson suggests that trilled /r/ was probably the most common realization in England until the 14th century. But, once again, this is an “either/or” assumption.

Wise (1948, 119) goes on to quote Ben Jonson who, in 1640, wrote, “R is the Dogs letter, and hurreth in the sound: the tongue striking the inner palate, *with a trembling about the teeth. It is sounded firm in the beginning of words, more liquid in the middle, and ends* (my italics).” At first glance, Jonson’s “trembling about the teeth” does indeed seem to correspond to an apico-alveolar trill (but see below for an alternative interpretation). Nevertheless, it sounds to me like Jonson may be distinguishing between trilled [r-] when in initial position but an approximant or retroflex (i.e. Jonson’s “more liquid”) [ɾ ~ ɻ] in post-vocalic or preconsonantal position.

Franklin’s second description of /r/ is found in Table 3, and here this description concerns only /r/ and provides us with a crucial detail. Recall that his first description in Table 1 /r/ is lumped together with /t/, /d/, /n/. Franklin’s account in Table 3, however, corresponds better to Johnson’s second “liquid” /r/. Here, Franklin writes that /r/ is “the same” (i.e. as <n>) but he goes on to specify that “the *Tip of the Tongue is a little looser or separate from the Roof of the Mouth*” (my italics and underlining). Compare this description to Franklin’s description of /t/, /d/ or /n/ (Table 1, Franklin, 1779, 468) where he says specifically that “the Tip of the Tongue is more forward, *touching and then leaving the Roof* (my italics).” His portrayal of /r/ as being “Separate from the Roof of the Mouth” in Table 3 is very precise and, unlike a trill or alveolar stop, which requires the tip of the tongue to strike the area of the alveolar ridge, this description sounds very much like an attempt to describe approximant [ɻ] or even retroflex [ɾ].

Furthermore, the key word he gives in Table 2 is “art,” which implies to me that he is really describing, at the very least, an approximant realization, when in post-vocalic position. Going a little further, I interpret the “the tip of the tongue a *little loose*” as potentially meaning it is “retroflex,” that is, with the tip of the tongue curved slightly towards the back of the palate. Admittedly, I may be reading too much into this, but this interpretation seems to mesh well with MacMahon’s analysis, who states that Kenrick’s description of /r/ most likely reflects:

a postalveolar or retroflex sound,” particularly his reference to the “tip of the tongue to the palate, bending it back as it were towards the throat, emitting at the same time a strong breath through the mouth which causes a *trepidation of the tongue* (my italics) so suspended; and of course a jarring, tremulous sound.

(Kenrick, 1784, 48, cited in MacMahon, 1998, 488)

Sheridan, like Franklin, also uses the term “vibrating” in his description: “Er is formed by *a vibrating motion of the tip of the tongue* between the upper and lower jaw, *without touching either*” (my italics) (Sheridan, 1786, 67, quoted in MacMahon, 1998, 488).⁵ MacMahon carefully points out that this “vibrating motion” could be the same as Kenrick’s “trepidation” and adds that “Had it been a trill, then he would not have expressly mentioned the lack of contact between the tip of the tongue and the roof of the mouth” (ibid.). It could only have been an approximant or a retroflex sound.

I apply the same reasoning to Franklin’s description of /r/, i.e. that his pronunciation of /r/, albeit similar to /n/, /t/, /d/, does not involve contact with the alveolar ridge. The “vibrating” or “trepidation” refers to the strong retroflex nature of the /r/ hence the “growling”-type quality referred to by Jonson above. Indeed, he refers to it as the “Dog’s letter.” Sheridan and Franklin’s “vibrating” and Kenrick’s “trepidation” occurs in the larynx or pharyngeal area of the throat, not the tip of the tongue.

How common was the trilled allophone of /r/ in the North American colonies? Although it would be difficult to prove either way, I would wager that it was probably marginal at best and disappeared altogether as a consequence of the “sharedness principle” defined in Chapter 11. Neither was it likely to have been a common feature of the British vernaculars (outside of Scotland and Wales). That the Hiberno-English /r/ is largely realized as [ɾ ~ ɽ] and almost wholly so in American and Canadian English and the fact that it is still the dominant pronunciation in traditional West Country English speech until the 20th century suggests to me that the retroflex/approximant /r/ was already dominant in the 16th- and 17th-century vernaculars in both England and North America. In addition, r-loss was already spreading westward from areas of southeastern and eastern England, a feature that was introduced into Massachusetts and the coastal areas of eastern Virginia around that time (cf. the discussion r-loss below). The trilled variants may well have been socially marked and fashionable among higher class speakers (hence its preference among the orthoepists) and thus comparatively limited to use within certain prestigious institutions. Historically, the trilled variant may even be a holdover reinforced by Norman French.

Franklin lived most of his life in Philadelphia where the etymological approximant [ɹ] appears to have been present in all positions (as it was in the Northwest Midlands of England at the time). It is still the rule in all the Midland

5 The same description appears in the 1780 edition of Sheridan’s “Er is formed by *a vibrating motion* of the tip of the tongue between the upper and under jaw, *without touching either*, and at about the same distance from the teeth that *el* is formed.” At this time, I have not been able to verify whether this use of “vibrating” appears in his 1762 *A Course of Lectures on Elocution*, in which case, Franklin might have borrowed the term from him.

American subvarieties of American English today which are often credited for having contributed most to the formation of General American English. For these reasons, it is likely that Franklin’s natural pronunciation of /r/ would have been [ɹ] in all positions and not trilled /r/.

As I have just stated (see also Chapter 23), it is also undeniable that many educated speakers in the London area and in New England (as well as the coastal regions of the southern colonies) had a weakly articulated post-vocalic /r/, a fact which is confirmed by Walker (Walker, 1791, 50, cited by MacMahon, 1998, 473) who writes that the pronunciation of /r/ (especially by Londoners) is “so soft that the pronunciations of ‘storm’ and ‘farm’ are nearly *staum* and *faam*” (on this also see Trapateau & Duchet, 2019). Examples taken from the official town records of New England and New York (cf. Chapter 8) show that there must have been a strong and early tendency to drop /r/ in these positions as early as the 17th century (cf. Chapter 23). As I have noted previously, this was probably considered substandard until the second half of the 19th century. We saw in Chapter 21, words such as “storm” and “farm” are pronounced in traditional Massachusetts English as [sta:m] and [fa:m].

2.8 RMS <t> for /t/

Table 1: consonant name	“ti” [ti]
Table 2: key word(s)	“teeth”
Table 1: description /*r, n, t, d/	1768/1779: “Then to those, formed more forward, by the forepart of the tongue against the roof of the mouth.”
Table 3: description /t/ only	“the Tip of the Tongue more forward, touching and then leaving the Roof.”

Here, Franklin is describing initial voiceless apico-alveolar /t-/. In Chapter 22, I proposed that voiced intervocalic [-ṭ-] was already part of the colonial feature pool as early as the 17th century. It is recorded by Wright (1905), the SED (Orton & Tilling, 1970) and Wells (1988) for parts of England. It is also common in Ulster English. We saw that there is evidence for this [ṭ] realization in 17th-century Massachusetts in words such as *carepindur* [kæ.ɹpɪdəɹ] for “carpenter” (also note the *pin-pen* merger here) (cf. Chapter 23 for more examples).

Nevertheless, I found no signs of [ṭ] in the rhymes of the New England poets or in Franklin’s RMS, which suggests to me that it was considered “vulgar” as it is today in some circles. His disparitary realization of intervocalic /t/ must have been [t] in all positions. I should add that, although the large majority of contemporary North American speakers use [-ṭ-] spontaneously and unconsciously, when this is brought to their attention, they often express that [ṭ]

is substandard and that it “should be” pronounced [-t-].

2.9 RMS <d> for /d/

Table 1: consonant name	“di” [di]
Table 2: key word(s)	“deed”
Table 1: description /*r, n, t, d/	1768/1779: “Then to those, formed more forward, by the forepart of the tongue against the roof of the mouth.”
Table 3: description /d/ only	“the same, touching a little fuller.”

By “a little fuller,” Franklin means that /d/ is pronounced exactly like /t/, the difference being that it is “voiced.” Note that in his description of /z/ below, he uses two terms to express voicing: “denser and duller.”

2.10 RMS <l> for /l/

Table 1: consonant name	“el” [ɛl]
Table 2: key word(s)	<l> as in <ell> or <tell>
Table 1: key word(s) /l, s, z/	1768/1779: “then those, formed still more forward, in the mouth, by the tip of the tongue applied first to the roots of the upper teeth.”
Table 3: description /l/ alone	“the same touching just about the Gums of the upper Teeth.”

This is an apico-alveolar lateral /l/. The two allophones associated with this phoneme are apico-alveolar “light” or non-velar [l] and “dark” or velar [ɫ]. The latter is especially prone to vocalization when appearing in post-vocalic position, especially after low back vowels. We discussed this feature more fully in Chapter 23.

Nevertheless, it is striking that Franklin distinguishes between /n/, /t/, /d/, which he states are produced by tapping the tip of the tongue against the roof of the mouth or palate which he distinguishes from /l, s, z/, which he describes (in both the 1768 and 1779 versions) as being formed by the “tip of the tongue” being applied to “the roots of the upper teeth” (Table 1). If we are to take this literally, his /s/ and /z/ must have been acoustically similar to a lisping /s/ and /z/ (more on this below).

The most remarkable feature in Franklin’s RMS is the retention of orthographic <l> before /d/ and /m/ in the following words: *would*, *could*, *should*, and *calm*. Wise (1948, 120) evokes the possibility that, like the vocalized /l/ pronunciation

of *walk* [wɒk] and *talk* [tɒk], which I have already described for southern Appalachian English, Franklin may have misinterpreted this vocalized [o] for a genuine apico-alveolar lateral [l]. If so, Wise appears to be indirectly suggesting that the pronunciation of <-alk> in New England was the same as it is now in the southern US. But, as Wise himself points out, such vocalization could not take place with *should*, *could* and *would* because, in such a case, vocalized /l/ would be assimilated to the [u] as in RP and GA [kud], [ʃud], [wud]. It very well could have been a conservatism that Stevenson and Franklin shared... or a case of hypercorrection (cf. /hw-/ above). Note that Shores (1984, 40) records [kɒlm] for Tangier Island in the Chesapeake Bay (next to [kæ(:)m], which appears to have been an older pronunciation of the vowel). [kæ(:)m] is also attested in the Smokies by Hall (1942).

When /l/ appears in final position in unstressed syllables, such as “people” *piipil* or “able” *ebil*, he and Stevenson add an epenthetic vowel [ɪ] between the bilabial occlusive and the lateral. In so doing, he adopts the same strategy as the New England and New York town clerks who were often at a loss as to which vowels to put in these positions (cf. Chapter 29). In natural connected speech, we saw in Chapter 23 that word final [t] was probably syllabic as in [ˈpi:p̩t̩] and [ˈe(:)b̩t̩], as in GA. In other words, [p̩t̩] and [b̩t̩] are homorganic.

2.11 RMS <s> for /s/

Table 2: consonant name	“es” [ɛs]
Table 2: key word(s)	<s> as in <essence>
Table 1: description /l, s, z/	1768/1779: “then those, formed still more forward, in the mouth, by the tip of the tongue applied first to the roots of the upper teeth.”
Table 3: description /s/ alone	“this Sound is form’d by the Breath passing between the moist End of the Tongue and the upper Teeth.”

By this, he means a voiceless apico-alveolar fricative [s]. This character replaces “soft” <c> in words like “civil,” “cease,” etc. Nevertheless, there are numerous inconsistencies in his transcriptions of word-final where <s> /s/ is transcribed in final position where <z> /z/ would be expected today.

A closer reading of the descriptions above provides another clue to this question. As stated above for the description of /l/, in Table 1, which is the same as for the original 1768 manuscript table (cf. Appendix 2), it specifically states that “the tip of the tongue applied first to the roots of the upper teeth.” We saw Smith’s example of *is’t* for “is it” being pronounced [i-st] rather than [ˈɪzɪt]. Here, however, the retention of the [s] here is due to its direct contact with voiceless [t]. In RP and GA, the tip of the tongue barely touches the alveolar ridge.

In Table 3, Franklin writes that /s/ is “form’d by the Breath passing between the moist End of the Tongue and the upper Teeth,” and not the alveolar ridge. Technically speaking, the tongue touches what is known as the “gomphosis” or the “dentoalveolar syndesmosis.”

As stated earlier, this sound must have given a lisping or whistling quality to his /s/ and /z/ which I have heard among old Lancashire people (born in the 1890s; see below). If this is the case, it may explain why he had occasional difficulty distinguishing between the voiceless and voiced counterparts (see the “learning curve” below). As we shall see below, this is very much the way Franklin describes his /θ/ and /ð/ phonemes as well which, he claims, were not inter-dental but dental. This may also explain why the order of presentation of these fricatives is part of a sequence /s/¹¹, /z/¹², /θ/¹³, /ð/¹⁴ (cf. below).

As unlikely as it might appear to a modern speaker, it is difficult to know for certain to what degree this may portray a special realization of his final [s] in post-vocalic position that may have been unique to him or, on the contrary and very simply, whether this represents simple lapses in concentration due to his inexperience in using his own alphabet. If so, these “lapses” are suspiciously numerous in the transcriptions of both Franklin and Stevenson. More on the oscillation between these two fricatives in section 3 below.

2.12 RMS <z> for /z/

Table 1: consonant name	“ez” [ɛz]
Table 2: key word(s)	“wages”
Table 1 description: /l, s, z/	1768/1779: “then those, formed still more forward, in the mouth, by the tip of the tongue applied first to the roots of the upper teeth.”
Table 3: description /z/ alone	“the same a little denser and duller.”

As mentioned above, by “denser and duller,” Franklin means “voiced.” The example he gives for this /z/ is the final fricative of “wages” [ʷɛ(:)dʒɛz], and which he could have transcribed as *uêdfez* or *ueedfez*. He describes the <z> as duller and denser (i.e. voiced) than the realization of /s/, in other words, a voiced apico-alveolar-dental fricative [z]. Although it is not among the words he or Polly Stevenson transcribes. One would have expected them to have transcribed it.

There is evidence from the rhymes in his poetry that his final [z] may have been devoiced in certain environments (see below for more details). The reason may result precisely from its possible “whistling” quality mentioned above.

2.13 RMS <*θ> for /θ/

Table 1: consonant name	“eth” [εθ]
Table 2: key word(s)	(th) “think”
Table 1: description /θ, ð/	1779: Then to those, formed by the tip of the tongue applied to the ends or edges of the upper teeth. 1768: Then to the Ends or Edges of the same Teeth; } edh dh
Table 3: description /θ/ alone	“the Tongue under and a little behind the upper Teeth, touching them nearly but so as to let the Breath pass between.”

Here, rather than applying the tip of the tongue inter-dentally Franklin applies the tongue

- a. “to the ends or edges of the upper teeth” (Table 1) and
- b. “a *little under and a little behind* (my italics) the upper Teeth” (Table 3).

This description may partly explain why he devised another h-looking character to indicate the IPA /θ/ /ð/ symbol. As Abercrombie points out, although aesthetically pleasing visually, both his voiceless [θ] and voiced counterpart [ð] are confusingly similar to his symbols for /h/ and /ʃ/ (cf. Chapter 25 and Appendix 1 to view them). Given that I have found no way to reproduce these symbols, I was constrained to adapt modern IPA symbols to reproduce these three characters (cf. Chapter 25 for more detail). I have reserved his **h** to represent [h].

As I explained in Chapter 25, it is probably the strongly aspirated characteristic that qualifies all four sounds and which may explain his h-like symbols for the /θ/, /ð/ and /ʃ/ sounds, since he may have considered the major characteristic binding these consonants to be that they were strongly aspirated fricatives.

Very significantly, the way he articulated /θ/ was not interdental as it is today in GA and RP, but simply dental, with the tip of the tongue nearly touching “the edges of the upper teeth” i.e. “with little or no contact”/ “touching them nearly”). He then adds (Table 3) that the tongue is a little under and behind the upper teeth which sounds very mouth like the tongue is nearly touching the roots of the upper teeth. This allows the pulmonary flow of air to pass between them, thus creating a sound similar but exactly like its modern RP/GA reflexes. This must have sounded very much like his /s/ where the point of articulation was at the base of the top front teeth.

2.14 RMS <*ð> for /ð/

Table 1: consonant name	“edh” [εð]
Table 2: key word(s)	(dh) “thy”

Table 1: description /θ, ð/	1779: Then to those, formed by the tip of the tongue applied to the ends or edges of the upper teeth. 1768: Then to the Ends or Edges of the same Teeth; } edh dh
Table 3: description /ð/ only	“the same a little fuller.”

Again, just as for /d/ above, by “fuller” he means “voiced” (a synonym of “denser and duller” for /z/), that is to say, the voiced dental fricative [ð]. In Table 3, he writes this sound as <dh>, which is also the digraph chosen by several 17th-century orthoepists, and later linguists such as Sir William Jones, who also integrates this digraph into his own system. We know that Jones had read Franklin’s RMS in depth, so there is a faint possibility that this choice results from Franklin’s influence (cf. Chapter 29). Aside from the fact that it is dental and not interdental, there is nothing particularly remarkable in his distinction between /θ/ and /ð/ and I have found nothing in his transcriptions that contradicts contemporary RP and GA usage.

If his descriptions of /s/ and /z/ are accurate, his /ð/ must have sounded similar to his /z/ which I have described above as having a lisping or, possibly, a whistling quality. Note that in modern GA, there is considerable oscillation between [θ] and [ð] in the pronunciation of a few words such as “with,” which Franklin pronounced “with” and “without” *uið* and *uiðæut*. During an earlier period, it probably was realized as a voiceless /θ/ which permitted the shift to voiceless /f/ in Cockney English and also AAVE: [wɪf].

2.15 RMS <f> for /f/

Table 1: consonant name	“ef” [ɛf]
Table 2: key word(s)	“effect”
Table 1: description /f, v/	1768/1779: “then to those, formed still more foreward by the under lip applied to the upper teeth.”
Table 3: description /f/ alone	“form’d by the lower Lip against the upper Teeth.”

His description corresponds to the voiceless labiodental fricative [f]. This character replaces digraphs such as <ph>, “physics,” “alphabet” and word final <gh> as in “enough” and “laugh.”

2.16 RMS <v> for /v/

Table 1: consonant name	“ev” [ɛv]
Table 2: key word(s)	“ever”

Table 1: description /f, v/	1768/1779: “then to those, formed still more foreward by the under lip applied to the upper teeth,”
Table 3: description	“the same fuller and duller.”

This corresponds to a voiced labiodental fricative [v]. Here again he uses the terms “fuller and duller” to express “voicing.”

2.17 RMS for /b/

Table 1: consonant name	“bi” [bi]
Table 2: key word(s)	“bees”
Table 1: definition /p, b/	1768/1779: “Then to those, formed yet more forward by the upper and under lip opening to let out the sounding breath.”
Table 3: description /b/ alone	“the lips put full together and open’d as the Air passes out.”

Here he means the voiced bilabial stop /b/. “As the Air passes out” suggests that his realization of it was quite strongly aspirated, [b^h], most likely when appearing initially in a stressed syllable but not necessarily in word-final position. In Welsh and conservative Welsh English, the aspiration causes devoicing of final [b] (Thomas, 1984, 184).

2.18 RMS <p> for /p/ >

Table 1: consonant name	“pi” [pi]
Table 2: key word(s)	“peep”
Table 1: definition /p, b/	1768/1779: “Then to those, formed yet more forward by the upper and under lip opening to let out the sounding breath.”
Table 3: description /p/ alone	“the same but a <i>thinner</i> Sound.”

By “thinner,” he means the “voiceless” bilabial stop [p]. This is the only instance in which he refers to voicelessness. Although it is true that Franklin appears not to have fully understood the phenomenon, this use of “thinner” seems to temper Wise’s assertion that he did not understand the concept of voiced and voiceless consonants.

2.19 RMS <m> for /m/

Table 1: consonant name	“em” [ɛm]
Table 2: key word(s)	“ember”
Table 1: description /m/ alone	1768/1779: “And lastly, ending with the shutting up of the mouth, or closing the lips while any vowel is sounding.”
Table 3: description /m/ alone	“the closing of the Lips, while the e is sounding.”

This is, of course, the voiced bilabial nasal [m]. I have described instances of [m] as being components of the archiphoneme /N/ which subsumes [m], [n] and [ŋ] when appearing in the initial morphemes (or pseudo-morphemes) such as IN- as in *impaasibil* “impossible” and *impurfeksʏn* “imperfection.” See <n> for examples such as “inconvenience,” “increasing.”

3. An Articulatory Phonetic Perspective of his Consonant System

Franklin imagined the order of presentation of his vocalic system in a very scientific way, which has gone unnoticed in prior studies of Franklin’s RMS. Likewise, for the time, the manner in which his consonantal system is structured has never been recognized. Although there are errors of analysis here and there, overall, he systematically organizes each consonant following the scheme presented in a remarkably coherent fashion. I have included numbers in superscript to indicate the order of presentation in his system. The reader may wish to compare this figure with the two tables of his consonant tables shown in Chapter 26. The sequence is from back to front.

Fig. 27.1 Franklin’s RMS consonantal system.

Franklin’s consonant system							
	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Apico- alveolar	Palato- alveolar	Velar	Glottal
Nasals	/m/ ¹⁹			/n/ ⁶		/ŋ/ ⁵	
Trills				/r/ ⁷			
Stops				/t/ ⁸ , /d/ ⁹		/k/ ³ , /g/ ²	
Liquids	/p/ ¹⁸ , /b/ ¹⁷			/l/ ¹⁰			
Fricatives		/f/ ¹⁵ , /v/ ¹⁶	/θ/ ¹³ , /ð/ ¹⁴	/s/ ¹¹ , /z/ ¹²	/ʃ/ ⁴		/h/ ¹

In the right-hand column, we observe the underlying logic that binds both his presentation of the vocalic system and the consonantal system, namely, the movement from the back of the vocal tract towards the front. This includes the following progression: glottal > velar > palato-alveolar > apico-alveolar > dental > labiodental > bilabial. Recall that he applied the same method with his vocalic system, starting his “natural order” with his mid back /ɔ/ proto-phoneme and working in a clockwise fashion, ending with a centralized London phonemic /ʌ/ (corresponding to his [ʁ ~ ʀ]).

- a. Sequence 1-5: glottal /h/ > velar /g/, /k/, /ŋ/ > palato-alveolar /ʃ/ (/ʒ/ is missing);
- b. Sequence 6-12: apico-alveolar /n/, /r/, /t/, /d/, /l/, /s/, /z/ (alveolar-dental for /s/ and /z/);
- c. Sequence 13-19: dental /θ/, /ð/ > labio-dental /f/, /v/ > bilabial /p/, /b/, /m/.

At one point in Sequence 1-5, Franklin somewhat surprisingly passes from velar /k/ to palato-alveolar /ʃ/ before moving back to velar nasal /ŋ/ (rather than the opposite). As explained previously, this may be due to the fact that he saw them both as having a common palatal quality. This hypothesis is confirmed by his description of the two consonants, which he lumps together in his July 1768 table to Polly Stevenson. Unfortunately, this table was not available to previous linguists such as Angus or Wise. They would certainly have picked up on this. <ish> and <ing> are thus described as “Then coming forward to those form’d by the Root of the Tongue next to the Windpipe.” This description is absent from Vaughn’s 1779 edition (either an error on his part or missing from Franklin’s own notes), but the underlying logic of his system is revealed by their order of presentation.

Again, notice that Franklin forgets to add velar nasal /ŋ/ in Table 1 in the 1779 edition of the RMS, hence the asterisk in the above figure, but he does include it in Tables 2 and 3. In the 1768 table (cf. Appendix 2), descriptions of “ish” and “ing” are presented together. As noted in Chapter 24, palatal and bilabial approximants [j] and [w] are classified as vowels and are thus absent from the discussion (cf. short [i] and [u]) and do not appear in this figure either (cf. Chapter 28 for the nature of these phonemes).

Following /ŋ/, he moves to apico-alveolar /n/ and then on to /r/ which, because of the order of classification, appears, at least on the surface, to represent its trilled apico-alveolar value. Indeed, he may have had this in mind when listening to certain sophisticated British speakers, including his Welsh and Scottish friends.

From here he moves very logically to apico-alveolar /t/, /d/ and /l/, followed by the alveolar fricatives, /s/ and /z/, dental fricatives /θ/ + /ð/, labiodental fricatives /f/ + /v/, bilabial stops /p/ + /b/, terminating with bilabial nasal /m/ at the very front of the vocal apparatus.

With regard to /r/, however, we saw in Chapter 25 and above that, exceptionally, he gives two different definitions for it in Tables 1 and 3, but only one key word, which is “art.” I also pointed out that in his July 20th 1768 correspondence to Polly Stevenson, the table describing apico-alveolar /r/, /n/, /t/, /d/ lacks the word “vibrating” which was added to Vaughan’s Table 1 in the 1779 edition (cf. above).

Note also that in Figure 27.1 the order of presentation of these consonants is as follows: /ŋ/⁵, /n/⁶, /r/⁷, /t/⁸, /d/⁹, /l/¹⁰... I interpret the logic of this sequence as follows /ŋ/ and /n/ (nasals), /r/ (an approximant or retroflex /r/ with a near point of contact behind the alveolar ridge and palate), /t/ and /d/ (apico-alveolars) and /l/ (apico-alveolar lateral).

Contrary to Wise, who believed that Franklin’s /r/ was an apico-alveolar trill in all positions, I have proposed the hypothesis that Franklin’s /r/, despite the misleading reference to “vibrating” that was added to the 1779 edition, should be analyzed in the same way as Sheridan (1786), who also uses the term “vibrating” to describe an approximant [ɹ] or retroflex [ɻ] (MacMahon, 1998, 488). I have previously asked whether this could be a sign that Franklin had read Sheridan’s work at some point between 1768 and 1777/1778 when Vaughan was editing his writings and the printer, J. Johnson, was doing the typesetting and composition of Franklin’s *Political, Miscellaneous and Philosophical Pieces*. If so, it is the only potential indication that I have found of this possibility.

Another observation is that Franklin’s system does not include the approximants /w/ and /j/, which almost certainly existed in the 18th- and even 17th-century vernacular. Franklin represents these as vowels or semi-vowels /i/ and /u/.⁶ Likewise, /ɱ/ [hu ~ hw] and also the affricates /tʃ/ or /dʒ/ are missing from his table because he views all three to be consonant clusters. Finally, we discussed his inability to distinguish between the voiced and voiceless fricatives /ʃ/ and /ʒ/. This explains his transcriptions of **tʃ** /tʃ/ and **dʒ** /dʒ/ but also his very curious ***zʃ** “affricate” which he designates to represent /ʒ/, a sound he considered “French.” It is true that it appears in words like *measure*, *pleasure* and *treasure* which are indeed of French origin. Nevertheless, we saw above that Orbeck gives a number of examples where the Massachusetts clerks write “division,” “divisional,” “provision” with “sh,” suggesting it was voiceless in a number environments.

Although Wise has a point when he suggests that Franklin could not distinguish between voiced and voiceless consonants or at least conceive the pertinence of this distinction from a theoretical perspective, I concluded that Franklin was handicapped by a lack of technical vocabulary and concepts. Nevertheless, even if he did not fully comprehend the relevance of phenomenon, he presents all

6 In Massachusetts public schools, children were taught that <y> and <w> were “semi-vowels” during the 1960s.

of the relevant consonants in phonemically distinct voiced/voiceless pairs (/p/ ~ /b/; /t/ ~ /d/, /k/ ~ /g/, /f/ ~ /v/, /s/ ~ /z/, with the exception of /ʃ/ ~ (/ʒ/), the latter being transcribed as a /zʃ/ cluster as seen above. As we have seen, to compensate he uses his own words to describe these concepts as well as he can with “dull,” “full” or “thick” meaning “voiced” and “thin” meaning “voiceless.”

Not surprisingly, he does not consider peripheral or recessive pronunciations that were certainly still heard in New England during his youth, such as Isaac Newton’s continued use of [x] in words such as “thought” or northern English dialectal [hn] for <kn> (or Aberdeen Scots [knæif] for “knife,” Reaney, 1927), or southwestern [uɪ] or [vɪ] in words such as “write” or “written.” These features and many more were certainly present in the colonial feature pool but shunted aside in accordance with the “sharedness” principle” discussed in Chapters 11 and 12. The latter was certainly a sociolinguistic mechanism resulting from Giles’ CAT.

Although it contains obvious flaws and inconsistencies, the fundamental logic behind Franklin’s conception of his consonantal system is sound and has never been previously explained. The table above is perhaps the best example of the rigorous manner in which Franklin conceived his system. It is also a testimony to his ability to absorb and adapt in a new and unique way the knowledge he had obtained from the orthoepists. Much of his system, I believe, stems from his own fertile imagination and his long experience and insights as a professional printer, typesetter and composer. One of John Hart’s motivations for devising an orthographic reform was to save ink and paper, which lead me to wonder whether he may have also been tied to the printing trade. This may in part explain some of the many similarities behind their motivations (cf. Chapter 13).

4. Inconsistencies in Transcription: The Learning Curve

In Chapter 25, I highlighted the importance of Franklin’s July 20th letter to Polly Stevenson in which he requests her assistance to correct and improve his orthographic reform. We have seen that, in this first letter, Franklin makes around twenty blatant transcription errors, most of which he systematically corrects within the body of the letter (normally just above the word). Other errors are left untouched, implying that, at least on the spur of the moment, he was oblivious to his mistakes.

4.1 <er> for *ʏr*

The first category of errors, and most numerous, concerns his traditional spelling of word-final, unstressed “er” which, in Table 3 he states should be transcribed as *ʏr* [əɪ]. In the first column we see his reformed spelling followed

by an IPA transcription and the same word in traditional orthography. Franklin occasionally corrects some of these (cf. *myðer* > *myðyr*)

<i>suner</i>	[ˈsʊnəɪ]	“sooner”
<i>myðer</i>	[ˈmɪðəɪ]	“mother”
<i>better</i>	[ˈbetəɪ]	“better”
<i>kaʊnsider</i>	[kəˈnˈsɪdəɪ]	“consider”
<i>laʊnger</i>	[ˈlɔːŋɡəɪ]	“longer”
<i>never</i>	[ˈnevəɪ]	“never”
<i>manaer</i>	[ˈmænəɪ]	“manner”
<i>kaʊnsidered</i>	[kəˈnˈsɪdəɪ(d)]	“considered”
<i>pepers</i>	[ˈpɛ(:)pəɪ(z)]	“papers”

In their September 26th and 28th letters, errors of this kind are minimal. Therefore, any remaining <er> transcriptions he or Stevenson give in their respective September 26th and 28th letters should simply be viewed as errors for unstressed *yr* [əɪ] that we investigated in section 2.7.

4.2 <ed> for <’d>

Another category of error reoccurs in his September 26th letter, that is, his forgetful transcription of final unstressed <ed> rather than his *’d*. This, in fact, is particularly strange since he normally spells it, i.e. <’d>, in his traditional spelling style (except when -ed follows word-final <-d> and <-t> in words like “waded,” “waited”). The only example encountered in this first letter which remains uncorrected is *kaʊnsidered*. However, it reappears in his September 28th letter along with a number of similar transcription errors:

<i>kaʊnsidered</i>	<i>kaʊnsidyrd</i>
<i>ditʏrmined</i>	<i>ditʏrmind</i>
<i>iuzed</i>	<i>iuzd</i>
<i>propozed</i>	<i>propozd</i>
<i>tʃendʃed</i>	<i>tʃendʃd</i>

These all appear to have been due to simple oversight. However, the inventory of the words he and Stevenson transcribe with final *ed* [ɪd ~ əd] occur, as would be expected, after word-final [-t], [-d]: *attempted*, *attended*, *intended*, *kaʊmplited*, *mended*, *persuaded*, *retʃed*, and *syrmæʊnted* (2 examples).

4.3 <uild> and <uirs> for <uuld> and <uurs>

Another inconsistency concerns odd transcriptions of “would” and “worse” which, in his July 20th letter, Franklin bizarrely spells with an <i> in both cases: **uild* and **uiuld* for *uuld* “would” and **uiurs* for *uurs* “worse.” Recall that, in Part III, I proposed that he pronounced this as [uɔ:ɪs ~ wɔ:ɪs] in his Boston idiolect. He immediately makes his corrections directly above the word in the body of his letter (cf. Appendix 2).

4.4 <tt> for <t>

In violation of his “one-sound-one-letter” rule, there are four examples in his July 20th letter where he doubles the <tt> for <t>, but this may have been an unintentional attempt to indicate that the preceding vowel was short. The first is *better* for *betȳr* [ˈbɛtəɪ] and *ritten*, which he later spells *riten* [ˈɹɪtɛn] (informal [ˈɹɪtən ~ ˈɹɪtɪ]). The other three examples of erroneous <tt>, all in the July 20th letter, are *attended*, *attended* and also *lettȳr* rather than *atended*, *atemted* and *letȳr*.

Another common error that both Franklin and Stevenson make (especially Franklin), is to not indicate long vowels where they probably existed. I have pointed out a fairly large number of possible examples in the previous chapters.

As we have seen, the only vowels for which he indicates length with any degree of regularity are [i:] (represented as <ii>) and [ɛ: ~ ɛ̃:] (represented by <ee> or by <ê>). I proposed in Chapter 25 that he may have intended *aa* [ɔ:] to be inherently long and I have suggested previously that this may explain the fusion of ɑ + ɑ. He indicates “brought” as *braat* in his July 20th letter but in his September 28th letter he spells “all” with a double *aa* + *aa*, suggesting he imagined it to be particularly long before <ll>: *aaal* [ɔ:l].

We have already discussed the question of <uu> above and concluded that it was not an example of long [u:].

4.5 <s> versus <z>

In the review of Franklin’s consonants (Tables 1-3, 1779) above, I mentioned that one of the features of Franklin’s RMS I found particularly intriguing is Franklin and Stevenson’s frequent transcriptions of <s> where one would expect <z> in Modern English (RP, GA or dialect). For this reason, one must be wary regarding the precise value of these apparent inconsistencies of /s/ for /z/, primarily because they are so numerous.

It is difficult to determine whether these are errors or perhaps a reflection of genuine 18th-century pronunciations. Although I tend to view all of these as “errors,” I feel obliged to ask whether devoicing or some other articulatory factor

may have been a characteristic of 18th-century English and whether, based on his examples, certain patterns emerge. I propose three potential explanations for these transcriptions:

- a. they may be lapses back into traditional spelling;
- b. they may be hypercorrections;
- c. they may result from the alveolar-dental, lisping or whistling realizations which may have made the distinction between /s/ and /z/ more difficult to recognize.

To determine if there was a learning curve in Franklin and Stevenson's transcriptions, I have indicated the most frequent cases where <s> and <z> appear in their written correspondence.

Note that, in my transcriptions, I have indicated [ʃ] where Franklin or Stevenson use the <s> character where, today, one would expect [z].

4.5.1 Franklin's /s/ and /z/ Realizations in his July 20, 1778 Letter to Stevenson

In Franklin's first letter, the large majority of his transcriptions of /s/ and /z/ correspond to contemporary GA/RP usage. For instance, he clearly distinguishes between "this" and "these." If he had not, this would have caused considerable confusion for the reader: **ðis** [ðɪs] and **ðiz** [ðɪ(:)z]. It would have been even clearer if he had simply doubled the <ii>: **ðiiz**.

Words normally spelt <ss> in traditional orthography regularly appear as in **ekspres** for "express" **fibilnes** for "feebleness" and **uirines** for "weariness" and so on. As one would expect, for traditional <ies> and <ese> spellings, he gives **senturiz** "centuries" and **Tʃyiniiz** (28/9/1768) [tʃɪ'ni:z] for "Chinese."

Spellings such as <ense> and <orse> are transcribed as **adhirens** "adherence" and "worse" as centralized **uʏrs** [wəɪs]. However, in Chapter 21, we saw that Franklin consistently rhymed words such as "discourse," "worse," "horse," etc., all with [ɒɪs], **diskaars**, etc.

Otherwise, he gives a scattering of examples with his <z> character in contexts identical to the usage encountered in contemporary GA: **hez** for "has" (2) and **iz** for "is" and, as one would expect, **bizi** "busy" or "bosom" **byzym** [bɪzəm] when in intervocalic position. Finally, he writes "indisposed" and "yours" as **indispozɔd** [ɪndɪs'pɔzd] and **iurz** [ɪuɪz].

On the other hand, he gives examples with <es> where one might have expected <ez> in contemporary GA after [-tʃ] or [-dʒ]: **eedfes** for "ages," **tʃeendfes** for "changes" and **instanses** "instances" where one would expect <z>. And yet the key word he gives for /z/ is "wages," literally, [ʊe:dʒez ~ ʊe:dʒɛz].

Finally, he gives /s/ rather than expected /z/ after voiced /m/ and /d/: **kystyms** for “customs” and **sacounds** (3 examples). He also offers the same transcription for this last example in his September 28th letter. Likewise, /s/ is given following voiced approximant /r/ rather than /z/ in **letters** for “letters,” **pepers** “papers” and **yðers** of “others” (“corrected” to **yðyrs**) but these all appear in his July 20th letter.

4.5.2 Polly Stevenson’s Treatment of /s/ and /z/

Stevenson gives two examples of traditional <-less> spellings as **ynles** [ʌnˈles] and **iusles** [ˈiʊs,les]. For “service” **syrvys**, note also her centralization of <er> which was generally pronounced [ɛɪ] in more sophisticated English, i.e. **servis** or or [æɪ] in the vernaculars **sarvis**. Finally, she does have postvocalic /z/ in word-final position where one would expect it today. The first example is **az** [æz] (3 examples) and also **ðoz** for “those.” We have seen in the last chapter that, like Franklin, she systematically transcribes “the” under its full form, [ði].

However, she also gives unexpected uses of /s/ where one would expect /z/ in contemporary English. These fall into the same categories as was seen for Franklin. For instance, the use of /s/ after voiced consonants alveolar consonants: **i(i)difyns** [i:diˈfəns] and **uyrds** (2 examples). Note that, in both of his letters, Franklin also systematically writes /s/ after final /-d/ in “words,” “roads,” etc. Likewise, Franklin and Stevenson both transcribe **letyrs** with final /s/ after /r/ where /z/ would be heard today.

In Vaughan’s edition of the RMS (Franklin, 1779, 472), her transcription of “ourselves” is **acourselves** whereas in the 1768 version she writes it correctly as **acourselvz**. Her 1779 transcription of “fixed” as **fixsd** is interesting in that she uses the letter <x>, which is not in Franklin’s system at all. Could she have been innovating here, inspired by Franklin’s mantra “one sound for one letter” (i.e. /x/ to avoid a digraph <ks>). Again, in her 1768 manuscript copy she transcribes it correctly as **fiksd** [fɪkst]. I do not understand why this transcription was modified.

Are these errors due to unintentional lapses back into traditional orthography or to the editor’s or printer’s carelessness? I have previously proposed that Vaughan was in possession of a second draft version provided to him directly by Franklin. Given the number of errors in Vaughan’s version, this seems more probable. For a comparison of the two versions see Appendices 1 and 2.

Finally, for **inkaənviiniensis** “inconveniences” (transcribed here with **ii** in Stevenson’s 1779 version of the letter), she gives final /s/ where, in contemporary English one would expect [səz ~ siz]. Another example of this kind is **difikyltis** for “difficulties,” where <-ties> is now pronounced [ti(:)z]. We have seen that Franklin generally spells these as <i(i)z> [i:z] suggesting that her spellings here

are simply due to inexperience in using the new alphabet.

To conclude, **iiisiiest** “easiest” (spelt **isiiest** in the 1768 version) is another interesting example where she gives intervocalic /-s-/ where one would normally imagine /-z-/ (as with **bizi** and **byzym** above). Furthermore, this is accompanied by a unique transcription having two long <ii> spellings. If the 1779 spelling is really hers, one senses that she was pronouncing the word aloud as she was transcribing the word syllabically: [i:] + [ʃi:] + [ɛst].

In this 1779 version of her letter, she is more consistent in her use of long [i:] (but not with her final <s> for <z>) than Franklin is himself, writing **iidifyns** (1768 **idifyns**), **inkaənviiniensis** (1768 **inkaənvinienis**), **iiisiiest** (1768 **isiiest**), **miininj** and **bituiin** (cf. Appendix 2 for a comparative view of Stevenson’s transcriptions in the two versions of her letters).

4.5.3 Franklin’s Treatment of <s> and <z>

I spoke earlier of a learning curve and Franklin’s spelling clearly shows that he had honed his transcription skills significantly during the two-month interval. Compared to the errors in his July 20th letter, the number is significantly reduced. For instance, voiceless /s/ appears correctly where one would expect it after voiceless velar stop /k/ and voiceless apico-alveolar stop /t/: **buks** (4 examples) for “books,” **uiiks** “weeks,” **mêks** “makes,” **etimaadofists** “etymologists,” **its** “its” but also after words spelt <nce> in traditional orthography: **sentens** (2 examples) “sentence” and **uyns** (2 examples) “once.” Finally, **ys** is given for “us” and **kes** for “case” (3 examples). “Discourse” is rendered as **diskors** which I interpret in this context as [ˈdɪs,kɔ:ɪs ~ ˈdɪs,kɔ:ɪs] (cf. above).

Just as in his first letter, Franklin correctly distinguishes between **ðis** “this” (2 examples) and **ðiz**⁷ “these” and both he and Stevenson also write “those” as **ðoz**, as one would expect.

Franklin transcribes the singular of **inkaənviiniens** (3 examples) “inconvenience” and the plural **inkaənviiniensiz** (7 examples). Stevenson, however, takes into account the long [i:] of **inkaənviiniensis** [ˌɪnkənˈvi:ni-ɛnsɪʃ] in the 1779 version of her letter. “Sentence” is rendered as **sentens** (2 examples) and **sentensez** as well as **advantedfez** “advantages” both with final /z/, showing that there is a pattern developing here that is recognizable to contemporary RP/GA speakers.

For this reason, one might consider prior transcriptions in this category such as **-sis** and **-dfis** as transcription errors. One example taken from this letter appears to be a relapse into traditional orthography at two levels. The

7 In this context, <this> (and not <these>) is probably intended and the voicing of <s> **ðiz** may simply result from the lenition of /s/ in intervocalic position. Conversely, it may simply be another error.

first concerns incorrect vowel length. On one hand, *edfes* for “ages” would have been a homophone of “edges” [ɛdʒɛʃ] at the time. Note that, in his first letter, he correctly transcribed it *eedfes* with long [ɛː ~ ɛː]. The second point is the unexpected final <es> in place of <ez> in both examples.

Traditional <ies> spellings are given as *-iz* in *difikyltiz* “difficulties” (6 examples) (compare this with Stevenson’s *difikyltis*) and *veriz* for “varies” as well as *etimaadodfiz* “etymologies” (2 examples). Traditional spellings, such as <ese>, are also rendered as expected for *Tfyiniiz* (just as in his first letter) and as seen above for *ðiz* “these.” Note also the following examples: voiced C + /z/: *bisqidz* “besides” and *aakyrz* “occurs” and V + /z/ *az* “as” (13 examples) and *laaz* “laws,” *aaluaz* “always.” Presumably the *-uaz* spelling of “always” was meant for *aaluez*. This is due to a confusion with the letter <a> which was pronounced [ɛː ~ ɛː]. Note, however, that the New England records show that, during the 17th centuries, some speakers were pronouncing ways as both [wæiz] or [weiz]. Several other words also show the expected use of /z/: *bikaaz* “because” *tiz* “it is” (recall Smith’s *ist* “is it?” (Smith, 1674)) and *iz* (17 occurrences) (and only one apparent slip written *is*), *iurz* “yours” and *aakyrz* “occurs.”

His transcription of the words *iurz* “yours,” *iuz* “use,” *iuzed* “used,” *ius* “use” (n.) and *iusles* “useless” correspond, with the exception of *iuzed*, to modern usage. There are two examples of this kind showing an obvious slip back into traditional orthography: *iuzed* and *propozed* with <ed> rather than the expected *iuz’d* and *propozd*.

Nevertheless, Franklin still retains *s* following /d/, /n/, /nd/, /ŋ/ and /r/, which are similar to the same kinds of mistakes outlined in Franklin’s first letter and Stevenson’s September 26th transcription: *rods* [ɹɔ(:)dʃ] for “roads,” *reens* [ɹɛ:nʃ ~ ɹɛ:nʃ] “rains” (in the poem “The Campaign”), *saaonds* [sɔʊndʃ] “sounds,” *θaauzands* [θɔʊzændʃ] “thousands” (2 examples). This last transcription provides a formal realization of the unstressed syllable where one would normally expect [θɔʊzændz]. Notice that he and Stevenson give the same transcription of this word (with final *s*) in the July 20th and September 26th letters.

Franklin also gives /s/ after voiced the velar nasal [ŋ] in *θiŋs* for “things” and *miiniŋs* for “meanings” (a variant spelling is *miniŋs* [mi(:)niŋʃ] where he forgets to double <ii>). Finally, he transcribes /s/ after voiced approximant /r/ in *ridyrs* [ɹi(:)dæɹʃ], *faarenɹrs* [fɔːɹɛnəɹʃ] for “foreigners” and *forfaðers* [fɔːɹfæðəɹʃ] for “forefathers” as well as after velar [ɬ] in *ruls* [ɹulʃ] (2 examples). He transcribes *digriis* [diːgɹiːʃ] “degrees” in Addison’s “Campaign.”

To conclude this section, it is probably the case that their transcriptions of final and occasional intervocalic <s> where one would expect <z> are mainly due to their inability to escape traditional English spelling conventions. Angus (1935) comes to this same conclusion.

Nevertheless, a more literal interpretation of the data suggests that both

Stevenson and Franklin have a tendency to retain <s> after words ending in /-ŋ/, /-n/, /-nd/ and /-d/. If there is a phonetic explanation for this, I can only imagine that the /s/ in these positions may have had more of a fortis character than it does now or, as indicated by his clear description of the realization of /s/ and /z/ as apico-alveolar-dental sibilants, the distinction between these following nasals and voiced apico-alveolar stop /d/ and /r/ may not have been particularly obvious to them... If so, was this lisping or whistling pronunciation characteristic of Franklin and Stevenson's speech? Was Franklin imitating Stevenson's speech or was it a more general chic pronunciation in higher London circles at the time that Franklin was trying to use to gain the respect of his political allies and opponents? All of this is speculation, of course, and the real answer may lie somewhere in the middle zone of these proposed explanations.

Conclusion

We shall now turn to Chapter 28 and an analysis of the possible New Englandisms that may have slipped into Franklin's transcriptions. Thanks to the data obtained about the phonology of colonial New England presented in Part III and the details about his model of pronunciation revealed above in his RMS, we are now in a better position to identify and judge the extent to which certain scattered irregularities in his RMS transcriptions may in fact be reflections of contemporary Boston and Philadelphia English. Of equal importance, determining the extent to which his New England or Philadelphia phonological traits resurface inadvertently in his RMS transcription will assist us in gauging how successful he was in codifying his refined London model of pronunciation that he sought to propose as the standard for the common people of the British Empire.

28. Features of Franklin's Boston Accent in the RMS and an Overview of Part IV

Introduction

The objective of Part III was to identify and trace the development of 17th- and early 18th-century phonological characteristics of the newly formed New England koine. In Chapter 24, I argued that the evidence gleaned Part III from Franklin's rhyme schemes and those of Barlow and Dwight concur with the observations provided not only by the 17th-century English orthoepists but also information extracted from the colonial New England and New York town records. 19th- and 20th-century studies on conservative American and English dialects support, often in remarkably precise ways, aspects of the data extracted from earlier written sources.

What is perhaps most striking, however, is that, taken collectively, the phonological features which tend to typify New England and American colonial English more generally correspond quite well to Mazarin's Type C1 variety (*floruit* around 1680) and, occasionally, to the even older B2 variety. Nevertheless, we also observe the increasing presence of Type C2 innovations (*Meat* words pronounced /mi:t/, *Wait* words realized as [we:t]) which were gradually gaining dominance in the New England feature pool throughout the 18th century. The advantage of the "feature pool" and "phonetic range" approach is that a broader array of variables can be taken into account than in a phonemic analysis.

As I have stated on several occasions, none of this is particularly surprising considering that Franklin was born in 1706, and was among the youngest of sixteen siblings, most of them born in the 17th century (the oldest being his sister Elisabeth Franklin, born in Northamptonshire in 1678). We saw in Chapter 2 that his father, Josiah Franklin, was born in Ecton, Northamptonshire, in 1657 and his mother, Abiah Folger, on Nantucket in 1667 (both of her parents having come from Norfolk, England).

We saw in Chapters 25, 26 and 27 that a number of conservative variants

occasionally crop up in Franklin's RMS and happen to match our descriptions of early New England English gleaned in Part III. These stand in sharp contrast to the more innovative London-style transcriptions that generally characterize Franklin and Stevenson's RMS transcriptions. I proposed that these New England-type features most likely crept into his transcriptions by inadvertence. Furthermore, because Stevenson's and Franklin's transcriptions are similar on nearly all points, I took this as further evidence that Franklin's English was based on the London model and that this can be largely explained by the fact that Polly was his partner in conceiving his RMS and, most especially, his main informant (cf. Chapter 25).

We noted that certain characteristics may be the result of Philadelphia-influenced variety that escaped his self-censorship (e.g. "war" [æ:ɪ], "calm" [kæ(:)lm], "when" [hw/huən-]...). Some of these features were current in the higher Massachusetts registers as well (lowering of [æ] being considered "vulgar" at the time. If this analysis is accurate, the presence of these features would confirm that, even after living years in England, he was never able or willing to shed his native pronunciation. Considering our analysis of his linguistic insecurity linked to the provincial nature of his accent, I am confident it was the former. Also worthy of consideration is the fact that a number of these New England characteristics were also shared with more conservative English varieties spoken in outlying areas of the English capital. This may explain why some of these characteristics escaped the notice of Polly Stevenson. Although she was an extremely intelligent and well-read woman, she did not belong to the aristocratic classes of London. If Franklin's decision to systematically centralize all his *Mercy* vowels (<er> > [əɪ]) it may have been at her recommendation. If so, this feature would betray her lower-middle-class origins. If this is the case, my impression is that Franklin was oblivious to the subtle characteristics of London phonology. It also suggests that, in London, centralized [ə(ɪ)] was more prevalent in the late 1760s than his own native [ɛɪ] realizations of *Mercy* words, a pronunciation that was preferred by Walker (1791) but also Duponceau (1818) in America.

Chapter 28 is thus divided into four major sections.

- The first outlines the irregular features that surface occasionally in his RMS transcriptions and which I have identified as being characteristic of the Massachusetts koine, features that were foreign to the proto-RP London variety he hoped to use as a model.
- The second section of this chapter outlines the manner in which Franklin's RMS treats vowels in unstressed syllables. This topic was introduced in Chapter 26.
- The third section identifies the proto-phonemic inventory of Franklin's

RMS and reviews the underlying logic and scientific innovations of his scheme.

- The fourth section offers a diachronic overview highlighting the major historical developments of Franklin's English.

A summary of the major observations and conclusions to Part III and Part IV are presented in the form of comparative tables and with accompanying analyses.

1. An Inventory of New England Features in Franklin's RMS

1.1 The *Pin-Pen* Merger, Massachusetts [ɪ] vs [ɛ]

All the scholars who have studied Franklin's alphabet have been struck by Franklin's examples revealing the *pin-pen* merger. Now largely identified with English spoken in the southern United States, including Appalachia and as far north as southern Ohio, it was once commonplace not only in the American colonies but also throughout large areas of England and can still be heard to this day (cf. Shorrocks, 1998 for Lancashire, cf. Chapter 16). Dobson (1968, 567-568) presents evidence that the merger first appears during the 13th century in the Southeast of England and, from there, this feature spread out into more central and northern areas of the country. Based on 17th-century orthoepistic evidence, the phenomenon appears to have been particularly common in the eastern English dialects which were precisely among the early contact vernaculars that contributed most to the formation of the early American koines (cf. Chapter 11 and 12). A host of examples were offered in the 17th-century New England town records (cf. Chapter 17).

Franklin gives only two spellings of this kind in his RMS, namely, *git* "get" and *frind* "friend." A question should be asked at this point given that we identified two allophones of short ME /i/, a tense [i] and a lax [ɪ]. So, was it [git] and [fɪnd] or [git] and [fɪnd]. In this case, I would suggest the former, considering that lowering from ME /i/ > ME /ɛ/, the shift from tense [i] to lax [ɛ], is somewhat unexpected (but possible).

We saw, for instance, that his uncle Benjamin also spelt "friend" as *frind* in a poem that he sent to Franklin Jr. in 1713 in which he rhymed *frind* with *attend* [ə'tɪnd?]. We have seen that some of his rhymes appear to reflect this same tendency *priest* ~ *rest* and *jest* ~ *priest* which may have been realized as [ɪ ~ i:] ~ [ɪ]. His rhymes of "dressed" (spelt *drest*) rhyme with "best" and "just" suggest either raising to [ɪ] for "best," "dressed" and "just" or, in the case of "just," fronting to [ɛ]. Given that "such" and "much" was realized as [sɪtʃ] and [sɛtʃ] and [mɪtʃ] in 18th-century Massachusetts (and throughout the colonies) and in

England, I suggested that the pronunciation of “just” here was [dʒɛst] or [dʒɪst] (cf. Chapter 17). It is likely that some Boston speakers pronounced “best” and “dressed” [bɪst] and [dɪrɪst]. This kind of detail raises the tantalizing question of whether Franklin (and his uncle and relatives) realized all *Pen* words in the same manner or whether they were limited to as few exceptional words.

How salient this feature was to English speakers in 18th-century London at the time is difficult to assess. More examples would need to be extracted to answer this point either way. Again, we viewed abundant English and American evidence in Part III showing that the *pin-pen* merger was extremely common in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Even if raising to [ɪ] was also common in England, Franklin’s *git* and *frind* examples appear to reveal another lapse in concentration here. Furthermore, in his RMS, Franklin systematically spells ME /ɛ/ with his single <e> [ɛ] character: *atend* [a'tend] “attend,” *attended* [a'tended] “attended,” *menʃyn* [ˈmɛnʃən] “mention,” *konsikuentli* [ˈkɒnsɪkuentli] “consequently,” *meni* [mɛni] “many” (2 examples), and so on. Based on this evidence, one can conclude that the [ɛ] pronunciation was not only sociolinguistically salient but more prestigious in his own mind than raised [ɪ]. This evidence implies that Franklin’s pronunciation was mixed and his use of formal and informal variables such as these were probably conditioned by register and social context (i.e. “idiom” ~ “institution,” cf. Chapter 10 and Glossary).

1.2 Massachusetts [ɪ] > [ɛ]

Contrary to the *pin-pen* merger, the opposite tendency was also commonplace in 17th-century Massachusetts English, namely the lowering of /ɪ/ > /ɛ/. Chapter 16 presented numerous words showing that the lowering of ME short /i/ to ME short /ɛ/. Dobson (1968, 566-567) cites examples of 16th- and 17th-century orthoepists recording [ɛ] for [ɪ] which I have called the *hill-hell* merger here. Coote (1596), the headmaster of a grammar school at Bury St Edmonds, Suffolk, describes [ɛ] in *mell* for “mill,” *hell* for “hill,” *knet* for “knot,” (some of whom still pronounced initial [kn-] in the 17th century), *bredge* for “bridge” as “the barbarous speech of your country people.” Daines (1640) also speaks of “mill,” “hill” and “bridge” having had [ɛ] in Suffolk (Dobson, 1968, 567).

We have seen that Suffolk provided more settlers to Massachusetts than any other county. To repeat, Fischer (1989, 36) shows that 59% of the Boston population was composed Suffolk and Essex people with a further 10% from London. The 17th-century Plymouth town records of Massachusetts provide numerous examples of this feature such *lettles* for “little,” *rever* for “river,”¹

1 These words are also spelt <ee> and pronounced [i:] both in New England and in the southern states (cf. Hall, 1942, and Lowell, 1848).

sence for “since” (as does Lowell 200 years later, another example of continuity), *Prence* for “Prince,” *wedth* and *weadth* for “width” and *betwext* for “betwixt.” The Dedham town records give *breng* for “bring” (1636), *wedowe* for “widow” and *commeted* for committed while the Groton records have *Skener* for Skinner (1664), *indeferent* for “indifferent” (1665), *wretten* for “written” (1665), *melle* for “mill” (1665) and so on. These appear to be a clear inheritance from the Suffolk dialect and the surrounding area. Here again, I found no evidence of this at all in his RMS.² I found no such spellings in his RMS or in his poetry.

1.3 Massachusetts [æ] > [ɛ]

Another New England feature involves the raising of lax /ɛ/ is found in the RMS, more specifically, Franklin's regular transcription of **hez** [hez] and “have” as **hev** [hev]. These are attested as early as the 17th-century Massachusetts town records. We also saw in Chapter 19 that Franklin rhymes words pronounced today with /æ(:)/ in GA/RP having /ɛ(:)/: *save* ~ *have* (1735), *gave* ~ *have* (1744), *brave* ~ *have* (1756), *saving* ~ *having* (1757). Such examples demonstrate his pronunciations of “have” in his everyday speech, whether in his informal or formal register. This demonstrates that he also pronounced words such as *last*, *pass*, *rather* and *racking* with /ɛ(:)/: *racking* ~ *taking* (1735), *together* ~ *rather* (1743), *west* ~ *last* (1749), *race* ~ *pass* (1750), *past* ~ *taste* (1756). In environments where RP now has [ɑ:] (“past” [pɑ:st], “half” [hɑ:f], “path” [pɑ:θ]) (associated with “vulgar” speech at the time!), similar raised pronunciations were in vogue in London and associated with the speech of “dainty young ladies” (Beal, 1999, 22). Lowell (1848) systematically gives *hev* for “have,” etc. in Massachusetts in the mid-19th century.

Nevertheless, examples of the raising of [æ] > [ɛ] in his RMS are restricted to “has” and “have.” Polly Stevenson must not have considered these features to be particularly dialectal or “unEnglish.” On the contrary, as we have seen previously, it may even have sounded “posh” to some speakers.

1.4 Massachusetts [ɛ:ɪ] for “are”

Similarly, Franklin regularly transcribes “are” as **er** in the RMS and, in his July 20th letter, as **eer**, suggesting it was [ɛ:ɪ]. In Chapter 19, we saw that the LALME (MacIntosh & Benskin, 2013, Map 17 “are”) shows that [ɛɪ] pronunciations were common, in particular throughout the Northeast of England but also with concentrations in Norfolk and Suffolk, during the late Middle English period.

² I was surprised to hear a nurse in her early thirties, a native of the Dayton area, Ohio, systematically pronouncing *if* [ɛf], *with* [wɛð], etc. in 2020. It struck me as being unique to this young woman.

This too is attested in the New England town records. Furthermore, Lowell's *Biglow Papers* (1848) demonstrate that these features remained popular in the Massachusetts vernacular throughout much of the 19th century. Contrary to Dillard's claims (1972, 1973, 1992), the pieces of evidence observed here and above, when considered collectively, demonstrate once again the seamless transmission of British English vernaculars and the vernacular colonial pronunciations recorded in 17th-century New England, not to mention Franklin's poetry (cf. also Grandgent's evidence, 1899). In Chapters 10 through 12 of Volume I, I presented the sociolinguistic reasons why the broadest British dialectal characteristics were weeded out of colonial speech.

Furthermore, I have argued that public education, which began in 1642 in Massachusetts, and persistent normative influence from England (i.e. Proto-RP and RP) (cf. Chapter 30) did the rest. The steady, but slow, drift towards a more standardized (disparitary) pronunciation was now inevitable but never complete. The older colonial features were better preserved in "relic" areas in the American South where the effects of formal public schooling took longer to institute.

1.5 Massachusetts [ɛɪ] for [ʔɪ ~ əɪ]

We have seen that, throughout the 18th century and into the early 19th century, <er> [ɛɪ] pronunciations in words such as "mercy" and "merchant" were considered more elegant in "polite" society in both America and England and in America until at least the first quarter of the 19th century (Duponceau, 1818). But we also saw that sociolinguistic judgments about [æɪ] and [əɪ] variants were diverging by the beginning of the 19th century. Whereas Duponceau (1818) demonstrates that Americans considered [æɪ] to be less vulgar than centralized [əɪ] (i.e. "bird" [bæɪd] ~ "bard" [bæ:ɪd]), Trapateau and Duchet (2019) demonstrated that sophisticated Londoners considered this same [æɪ] realization to be more "vulgar" and, although less polished than [ɛɪ], [əɪ] was felt to be more acceptable than [æɪ]. It is this centralized pronunciation which Franklin adopts almost systematically in his RMS. Note that Kenrick (1773, 24) also writes that "bird" is pronounced like "cur," "her" and "sir," describing the vowel as "short and close," i.e. [əɪ]. It is Kenrick's style of pronunciation that Franklin adopted, perhaps with Polly Stevenson's encouragement.

However, there are several examples in the RMS where Franklin transcribes <er> words as [ɛɪ] and not the normal centralized [əɪ] which leads me to believe that they reproduce Franklin's natural pronunciation. Potential examples of [ɛɪ] pronunciations involve Franklin's treatment of "persuaded" and "perfectly." He writes *persuaded* in traditional orthography. This was almost certainly an error, and one would have expected him to have transcribed it as

persuêded [pɛɹ'swɛ:dɛd ~ pɛɹ'swɛ:dɪd] or, with centralization of [pɛɹ-] > [pəɹ-], *pyrsuêded* [pəɹ'swɛ:dɛd ~ pəɹ'swɛ:dɪd]. Other examples of this kind are seen in his transcription of *imperfekʃyn* [ɪmpɛɹ'fɛkʃən], rather than the expected *impurʃfekʃyn*, and of *faərmerli* ['fɔɹməɹli], for **faərmɹli* ['fɔɹməɹli] (unless they are due to simple lapses in concentration).

"Perfectly" is transcribed twice. The first example is realized as *perfektlɥi* in his July 20th letter to Polly Stevenson and contains not one but two discrepancies: *per-* [pɛɹ-] and *-lɥi* [ləi] (cf. below). As we have just seen above, *per* [pɛɹ-] was considered prestigious until the end of the 18th century and even into the 19th century. The fact is, however, that Franklin and Stevenson both systematically centralize all of these <er> spellings wherever possible in the RMS. (Another notable exception and probably New Englandism is Franklin's *ɥnlarn'd* [ən'læɹnd] below). If Stevenson truly served as a linguistic model for Franklin, this would suggest that, at least with regard to centralization, her accent was more innovative than his. Given her age, this would not be at all surprising. To repeat, if this is accurate, some older polite speakers may have judged her speech to be a sign of her lower-middle-class origins. Recall that Franklin corrected *perfektlɥi* to *purfektli* ['pɔɹfɛktli] in his September 28th letter.

It is highly likely that, dialectally, the interplay between ME /er/ [ɛ(:)ɹ] and ME /ar/ [æ(:)ɹ] was commonplace and also a feature of Franklin's idiolect. The shifting most probably depended on unconscious factors such as idiom (i.e. paritary or disparitary register) and the formal or informal institutions in which they were used.

1.6 Massachusetts [æɹ] for [əɹ]

A similar example concerns Franklin's RMS spelling of "learn" which he normally renders with centralized *ɥr* in *lɥrn* "learn" and *lɥrnɪŋ* "learning." But the centralized form was also an innovation, albeit not a recent one because we saw in the Massachusetts town records that it was commonplace. We saw, however, that he slipped back into his Massachusetts idiom with his transcription of *ɥnlarn'd* [ən'læɹnd] for "unlearned," a realization which appears to have been stigmatized in London at the time, where [lɛrnd] would have been preferred.

This would seem to increase the possibility that [æɹ] was viewed as a "provincialism" by sophisticated Londoners. For instance, Orbeck (1927, 21) notes numerous Massachusetts spellings such as *harded* "herded" (Groton, 1682), *saruis* "service" (Watertown, 1674), *sartain* "certain" (Groton, 1694), *sartyfy* "certify" (Groton, 1683), *disarned* "discerned" (Dedham, 1683), *consarned* "concerned" (Watertown, 1673), *detarmin* "determine" (Dedham, 1678, Watertown, 1671), *tarms* "terms" (Groton, 1685), *larne* "learn" (Dedham, 1681), *sarch* "search" (Dedham, 1703, Groton, 1682), *afarmative* "affirmative" (Dedham,

1703) and *seirgt* “sergeant” (Watertown, 1663)... Identical forms are found in English sources: Verney memoirs (1640s) and Wentworth Papers (1705-1739) among others (for more details, return to Chapter 18). All of these but the latter were realized as either [æ(:)ɪ ~ a(:)ɪ] in Massachusetts.

Observe the continuity between the examples just cited and the following taken from Lowell’s 1848 *Biglow Papers*: *larn* [læɪn] “learn,” *desarve* [de’zæɪv] “deserve,” *sartin* [sæɪtm] “certain,” *convartin’* [kən’væɪtm] “converting,” *consarnin’* [kən’sæɪnm], *consarn* [kən’sæɪn] “concern,” *warn’t* [wæɪnt] “weren’t,” *barthright* [bæɪθɹaɪt] “birthright,” *marcy* [mæɪsi] “mercy,” *marciful* [’mæɪsɪfəl] “merciful”... This all seems to confirm my observations (and Krapp’s long before me) regarding the rhymes of the New England poets:

Many of the rimes of the New England poets indicate not only that modern [ɛ:] was pronounced as [æ:], the preliminary stage to what later became Southern and Northern dialectal [ɑ:] in *there*, *bear*, *bare*, etc., but that even some words which have [i:] in present English, for example, *ear*, *year*, were formerly pronounced with a very open vowel, [ɛ:] or [æ:]. (Krapp, 1925, 109)

In some varieties (Appalachia and southern varieties), these [æɪ] realizations were further lowered to [ɑɪ ~ ɒɪ] and, in some cases (*year*, *there*, *were*...), to central [əɪ], as mentioned above. Shorrocks provides similar examples for Lancashire.

1.7 Massachusetts [ɛ:ɪ] vs [æ:ɪ]

A possible example of this fluctuation between [ɛ:ɪ] and [æ:ɪ] may be seen in Franklin’s transcriptions of “there,” which he spells as **ðeer** [ðɛ:ɪ] (July 20th letter), **ðer** which, literally interpreted would be [ðɛɪ], with short [ɛ]. I interpret his initial long [ɛ:ɪ] to be the more accurate transcription and reflective of his idealized model. On the other hand, he also spells it **ðaer**, which may show some hesitation on his part between **ðer** [ðɛ(:)ɪ] and **ðar** [ðæ(:)ɪ] realizations. Based on the New Englanders’ rhymes, I concluded that there was indeed oscillation between [æ(:)ɪ] ~ [ɛ(:)ɪ] and I also identified this tendency as part of the 17th-century colonial feature pool. Krapp (1925) also concluded that both pronunciations were common in early New England.

We saw in Part III that Franklin and the New Englanders still were pronouncing “here” as [hɛ:ɪ ~ hɐ:ɪ] and Trudgill (2016) indicates that “here” is still a homonym of “hair” in Norfolk today. Wright (1905, 482) confirms this transcribing “here” as [hɐəɪ] for Norfolk and Suffolk and “near” [neəɪ] for Staffordshire, Leicestershire and Suffolk. Wright (1905, 537) records *near* as [nɑ:ɪ], [næɪ] and [nɐɪ] for parts of the North of England and Scotland. In passing, we also saw that the Hempstead records (NY) spell *near* as *nare* [nɛ:ɪ ~ næ:ɪ] (1665) and *nar* which I suspect may represent a lowered [na:ɪ] (1686).

1.8 <ar>: Massachusetts Disparitary [æ(:)ɪ]

It appears that in both England and colonial America (particularly in the middle colonies and southern hinterland, excluding the Tidewater region), the formal pronunciation of *Start* words remained [æ(:)ɪ] until the beginning of the 19th century. Franklin systematically records *Start* words in his RMS: **far** [fæ(:)ɪ], **hardli** [hæ(:)ɪdli], **partikularli** [pæɪ'tɪku'læɪli], **unlarn'd** [ən'læ(:)ɪnd] for “unlearned,” etc.

Lowering was also common in this position in the paritary registers of the New England dialect and, from the 17th century onward (see below), increasingly characterized by the loss of post-vocalic and preconsonantal /r/. Dobson (1968, 545-546, cf. Chapter 19) supports this idea, writing that [sta:(ɪ)t] marks an earlier stage of pronunciation than modern RP [stɑ:t] (or GA [stɑrt]).

Start words are still pronounced [sta:t] in eastern Massachusetts today, showing that it never reached the [ɑ:] stage, typical of RP. The pattern of change would thus have been: [stæ(:)rt] > [sta(:)ɪt] > [sta:t] in New England. London would have gone a step further in the lowering process, giving [stɑ:t]. Since lowering and r-loss were considered “vulgar” in 18th-century England, Franklin most likely refused these trends in his RMS. Webster (1789) accepted lowering but not r-loss, which he condemns. Franklin would have pronounced it [stæɪt].

We have also seen that, in New England, the “vulgar” tendency was to favour the lowering of [æ(:)] > [a(:)] before /r/ and to [ɒ:] after /w-/ , /hw-/. There is ample evidence of this lowering in the 17th-century Plymouth town records alone: *whorfe* [hwɔɪf ~ hwɔɪf] for “wharf” (Plymouth, 1691), *whorfs* (Plymouth, 1699), *whorfage* (Dedham, 1705), *worned* [wɔɪn ~ wɔɪn] for “warned” (Groton, 1706) and *quorter* ['kwɔɪtəɪ ~ kwɔɪtə] for “quarter” (Plymouth, 1692) as well as *swomp(e)* [swɔmp] (Dedham, 1677, Plymouth, 1679) (cf. Chapter 19).

Franklin's resistance to lowering the vowel here appears to be a sign of New England conservatism ([wænd] “wand,” [(h)wæt] “what,” etc., cf. Chapter 19 for examples in his poetry).

1.9 Massachusetts New England Short o [ɔ̃] vs RMS <o> [ɔ(:)]

Much discussion has been devoted to New England short o, but I have found only a few possible hints of this short <o> character in his RMS. Franklin spells “whole” **huol** [huɔl ~ hwɔl], “roads” **rods** [ɪɔd] and “grows” **groz** [gɪɔz] with no indication of vowel length and thus possibly with “short o,” but it is hard to know its precise value here: short [ɔ̃] or [ɔ̃](?). Could he even hear the difference? Given that we have identified **y** with [ɣ ~ ɣ̃] from the beginning in Franklin's speech, it would stand to sense that he would have used this symbol to represent his native pronunciation. Although Grandgent states that it was

not heard in Massachusetts, note that I have also classed **u** phonemically as / Δ / for two reasons. First, innovative [Δ] was heard in Connecticut and probably in other areas of New England, and secondly, it was apparently the dominant form in London. Since his objective was for cultivated London English to serve as an ideal pronunciation for the British people throughout the Empire, I chose this innovative vowel as the phoneme, while [$\gamma \sim \text{ɥ} \sim \text{u} \sim \Delta$] represent the phonetic range.

In his description of his <o> character (Tables 1 and 2, 1779), he makes no mention of <o> being rounded (contrary to his description of <u>) which could be an indication that it may have been slightly centralized to [γ] (as described by Grandgent 1899). Indeed, all of the authors since Webster (supported by evidence from the Massachusetts town records) give examples such as “road” and “whole” along with “home,” “stone,” etc., as having short [$\gamma \sim \text{ɥ}$]. These are sometimes spelt <u> in the early American texts but recall that Grandgent (1899, 217) “corrected” Dearborn’s spelling of *hum* for “home,” writing that his <u> was “doubtless intended to represent *hòm* not *hēm* although [e] is actually used in Connecticut,” that is to say, [hɣm] and not [hɒm] (cf. Chapter 22). In an important footnote, Dobson (1968, 674) writes that

Rhymes which depend on raising of ME *ɔ*: to ME *ɔ*: are not uncommon in ME texts. At least of the Southeastern area, and occur, for example, in Havelock and the Alexander group. In a valuable note in *English and Germanic studies*, ii (148-9), 3-9, G.V. Smithers shows that such rhymes occur before [m] in “home,” the dentals [d], [n], and [θ], and in final position; he appears to regard them as depending on a licence of rhyming, but in view of the almost exact correspondence with the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century evidence cited below of [u:] for ME *ɔ*: before [t], [n], [θ], [m] (and other consonants), and in the final position it is clear that the rhymes *depend on real pronunciations which were obviously abnormal* (my italics). (Dobson, 1968, 674; cf. the discussion on “New England short o” in Chapter 22)

Dobson (*ibid.*) gives evidence from Chaucer’s rhymes of *anon* ~ *agon* (pp) ~ *don* (to do inf.) (*Troilus & Cressida* ii 410), *forsothe* ~ *both*, (*Troilus & Cressida*) and *hoom* ~ *doom* in late 14th-century London English showing the raising of ME /*ɔ*:/ > /*ɔ*:/. In a number varieties, this high back vowel was later shortened giving a “phonetic range” of possible variants involving [*ɔ* ~ *ɣ* ~ *u*] and slightly lower [*ɔ* ~ *ɣ* ~ *ɔ*]. He also cites Gower who also rhymes *home* with words having high back [*ɔ*:].

Dobson (1968, 509) also cites Turner’s *Art of Spelling and Reading English* (1710), noting that he also describes *home*, *stone* and *whole* as having what he describes as a “ME short u” and, more recently, E. Bagby Atwood (1971, 262) recorded *hum* for “home” (along with [həʊs] “house,” p. 259) at numerous points of Tidewater, Virginia, showing that it once was current in this southern colonial settlement as well. Recall also Chaucer’s spelling of *hoom* for “home” in his

Canterbury Tales proving its long history. This is yet another common English inheritance that is shared by both the Virginians and the New Englanders and appears to reinforce the probability of the “founder generation” hypothesis (the majority of the first waves of settlers to Virginia left England from London). Finally, we saw that Trudgill (2016) records “home” as having /u/ for his native Norfolk while the SED (Orton & Tilling, 1970) gives numerous examples of *Goat*, *Foot* and *Strut* words realized as [ʊ]. This would appear to confirm the plausibility of this historical account. All of these data conform nicely with those gleaned from the New England poems (cf. also Chapter 22).

A final example could be *long* [lɔŋ] “long” rather than the expected *laɔŋ* [lɔŋ]. Contrast this with Franklin’s RMS transcription of “along,” *alaɔŋ* [a'lɔŋ]. These examples of short <o> in his scheme may reflect an unsuccessful strategy to normalize his native [ʊ ~ ʏ] pronunciation by replacing it with a short [ɔ]

1.10 Massachusetts <aar> /ɔɪ/

For the most part, Franklin transcribes traditional <or> spelling with his <aar> character, to which I have ascribed the value of [ɔ(:)] and perhaps even [ɑ(:)]. Common examples of these transcriptions are *staarm* [stɔɪm] “storm,” *faar* [fɔɪ] “for” (compare with his *far* [fæ:ɪ] for “far”), *faarmerli* [fɔɪmɛɪli] “formerly,” *faarenɪrs* [fɔɪɛnɛɪz] “foreigners,” *faargaat* [fɔɪ'gɔt], *refaarmefɪn* [rɛfɔɪ'mɛ:fɛn] for “reformation” by Franklin (and not **refɪrmɛfɪn* [rɛfɔɪ'mɛ:fɛn]) and a host of other words. On occasion, however, he transcribes words such as “forefathers” as *forfaðɪrs* [fɔɪfæ:ðɛɪz] (rather than **faarfæðɪr* [fɔɪfæ:ðɛɪz]). This could be a sign of the raising of [ɔɪ ~ ɔɪ] > [ɔɪ] or simply another of his transcription errors. Many Americans today would pronounce “formerly” with [ɔ(:)] or [ɔ(:)] (because it is stressed) and “forgot,” “reformation” with centralized [əɪ].

1.11 Massachusetts [ɪ ~ əu] vs [ɔi ~ ɔi] in *Price* and *Choice* Words

In Chapters 16, 23, 26 and 27, we pointed out that Franklin described two variant forms for *Price* words and *Choice* words. With regard to *Price* words, we saw that, in his 1768 manuscript version of his vowel and consonant chart, he proposed *ai* and *yi* as possibilities. We concluded however that *ai* was not only a London pronunciation but also that it was probably considered to be vulgar by many Londoners, including Polly Stevenson and his Cambridge-University-educated editor, Benjamin Vaughan. For whatever reasons, we saw that his *ai* pronunciation was excluded from the 1779 edition of the RMS. The interesting point here is that the Massachusetts [ɪ ~ əu] pronunciation was probably viewed as being “polite” and close to polite London /aɪ/. Yet, the fact that he even considered *ai* for his RMS scheme seems to indicate that he did not have much

of an understanding of what was posh London English and what was not, hence his July 20th letter requesting Polly Stevenson's assistance.

In Chapter 27, we discussed the case of "destroyed," which transcribes as *distraauid*, and saw that his interpretation of it appears to mask a hybrid pronunciation similar to his rendering of *daer* (cf. above). In this case, *distraauid* seems to conflate *distraaid* [dɪs'tɹɑɪd] and *distruyid* [dɪs'tɹɪd], thus revealing a similar confusion in his mind over which pronunciation to adopt. He transcribes the word in this manner twice, which erases the chance that it was an unconscious slip.

Recall also that all the New England poets commonly matched *Price* ~ *Choice* words in their rhymes, showing that the diphthong in both cases was identical. This hypothesis gains some support from MacMahon (1998, 413, 464) who gives /ɔi/ for London *Choice* words and (quoting Perry, 1793, xvi-xvii) and Smith (1795, 79) [ɔ:i] for *Price* words. For reasons discussed previously (i.e. [ɔ:] being a 19th-century innovation), MacMahon's [ɔ:i] was probably realized as [ɒ(:)i ~ ɑ(:)i].

If the above hypothesis is correct, could *distraaid* correspond to Franklin's initial 1768 description of the *Price* diphthong and which he described as being realized as "aw" + "ee," the latter having "The true Sound of the i is that we now give to e in the words *deed, keep, &c*" (Franklin 1768)? I interpret this to be [ɒ(:)i].

Based on Orbeck's evidence, the dominant realization of 17th-century Massachusetts *Choice* words appears to have been [ɪ ~ əi ~ ɔi] and possibly [ɛi ~ æi ~ ai]. We saw a few possible accents in what appears to be very conservative [ui]. Considering that Orbeck also shows that the dominant *Price* vowel was [ɛi] (alongside [əi]?), and given that *Price* ~ *Choice* words were frequently rhymed, one might have expected some 17th-century New Englanders to have realized *Choice* words as [ɛi] (as in contemporary Lancashire, Shorrocks, 1998) and variant examples of the phonetic range suggested above. I found no evidence of *Choice* words pronounced [ɛi] in the New England or New York town records or, for that matter, in his RMS. Based on this information alone, it would appear that Franklin's [ɒ(:)i] pronunciation for both *Price* (only in his 1768 manuscript) and *Choice* words could be based on Polly Stevenson's accent(?) or popular London pronunciation he heard during his stay there.

To conclude, I have proposed that his muddled *distraauid* [dɪs'tɹɑɪd] may correspond to Franklin's failed attempt to represent London pronunciation and, again, perhaps Polly Stevenson's accent, whereas *distruyid* [dɪs'tɹɪd ~ dɪs'tɹɪd] reflects his own accent, but also, in this case, the more cultivated variant. If so, Franklin's initial [ɒ(:)i] interpretation, corresponds quite closely to MacMahon's [ɔ:i] and should probably be viewed as being due to London influence. It may have been considered to be too innovative to be included in the 1779 edition.

The more conservative [ɪ ~ əi] was more commonplace in both educated circles in America and England. By the last decade of the 18th century, Perry

(1793) and Smith (1795) work shows that the [ɔ:i ~ ʊ(:)i] pronunciation was gaining ground in London. It is more likely that Franklin and his fellow New Englanders realized both *Choice* words and *Price* words, in polite speech, in the area of [ɹi ~ əi]. In rural areas of Massachusetts, it appears that older [ɛi] and [æi] realizations were dominant, finally giving [ai] in conservative American varieties all along the east coast. Recall Lass' argument that [ɛi] preceded [əi] in southern England (Lass 1999). By the 19th century, the realization of *Choice* words was also commonly [ai] and this was recorded from New England (Lowell, 1848, Grandgent, 1899) to southern Appalachia (Hall, 1942).

1.12 Massachusetts -ly [-ləi ~ lɹi] vs [-li]

The diphthongized realization of <y>, <ly>, <ity>, etc. was quite outdated but a solid characteristic of the New England English koine of the 17th and 18th century. I first noticed it when analyzing Franklin's Blackbeard poem that he composed in the Boston paritary register, in "Grub-Street-ballad style" as he put it, in the rhyme *manfully* ['mænfə,ləi] ~ *die* [dɹi]. Initially, I wondered whether this was a fluke or, more importantly, an older regional pronunciation.

If it is a conservative feature, it is quite a remarkable relic because, according to Dobson (1968, 843), this is a typical characteristic of 16th- and 17th-century English (cf. Chapter 16) and he cites Hart (1569) as pronouncing "wholly" as ['hwɔləi]. Based on our discussion of *Price* words in Chapter 16, I interpret the final 16th-century realization of -ly to have been pronounced ['hwɔləi]. Hart was too fine a phonetician to make such an error. This diphthongal pronunciation was shared (alongside innovative [i]) by Alexander Gil (1619) and other orthoepists (Bullockar, Hodges, Newton, etc.).

The next question was to verify whether there were attestations of this in Franklin's RMS. The most striking example was his two transcriptions of "perfectly." The first appears in his July 20, 1768 letter to Polly Stevenson which, as I have mentioned previously, was a practice run in terms of transcription. Here he writes *perfektly* ['pɛ:fɛktləi] (I have simplified the transcription of -ly to [əi]). Initially, I wondered whether this was not simply a clumsy attempt at reproducing the word phonetically. Yet, in his September 28th letter, he corrects it to *pyrfekli* ['pɛ:fɛktli], just as in GA. At this point, I asked myself whether this correction may have been made at the suggestion of Polly Stevenson, who would have had a more innovative pronunciation. As we see, this transcription contains two interesting discrepancies. The first we have discussed above, namely, [pɛɹ-] instead of innovative centralized [pɛɹ]. The second is [ləi] rather than innovative [li].

The fact that Franklin did not immediately correct this inconsistency in his July 20th letter, as he did nearly 20 other transcription errors (cf. Chapter 27 and

Appendix 1), suggests to me that he considered [pɛɹ] for <per-> and [ləɪ] for <-ly> to be “normal.” Based on evidence presented in Chapter 16, I demonstrated that his rhymes with “-ly,” “-y,” “-ity” were also pronounced [ləɪ], [əɪ] and [ɪtəɪ] even when unstressed. Furthermore, given that I found numerous examples of identical rhymes to Franklin’s *manfully* ~ *die* example (composed when he was thirteen years old) among famous English poets, I began to see that this feature was also alive and well in the 18th century (cf. Chapters 23 and 24).

The next step was to search for similar examples in his RMS. It was then that I came upon “hurrying” as *hurɹyɪɪŋ* [ˈhʊɹjəɪ·ɪŋ] (his Boston pronunciation). If we break down the word syllabically, as he would have intended it to have been read aloud by the students of his “English school” (Philadelphia Academy, now the University of Philadelphia), he would probably have done so as follows: [ˈhʊɹ] + [jəɪ] + [ɪŋ], thus suggesting that his natural pronunciation of the base form “hurry” was close to [ˈhʊɹjəɪ ~ ˈhʊɹjəɪ]. (cf. his Massachusetts’ pronunciation of <u> in Chapter 22).

A third example is his transcription of “rectifying,” *rektɪfɪyɪɪŋ* [ˈɹɛktɪfəɪ·ɪŋ] which is constructed on the base word *rektɪfɪ* [ˈɹɛktɪfəɪ]. Note that all *-ing* endings (21 examples) are indicated with a single <i>. That *ii* is doubled here implies that these [ɪŋ] spellings were pronounced in hiatus, i.e. [ˈɹɛktɪfəɪ·ɪŋ] in all three cases. See also *biɪŋ* “being” for [ˈbi·ɪŋ].

Other examples of this same phenomenon are *satisfɪd* [ˈsætɪs.fəɪd] “satisfied” and *signɪfɪd* [ˈsɪɡnɪ.fəɪd] “signified.”

The base forms of the examples appearing in the RMS are thus:

<i>perfektɪ</i>	[ˈpɛɹ.fɛkt.ləɪ]
<i>hurɪ</i>	[ˈhʊɹ.jəɪ]
<i>rektɪfɪ</i>	[ˈɹɛktɪ.fəɪ]
<i>satisfɪ</i>	[ˈsætɪs.fəɪ]
<i>signɪfɪ</i>	[ˈsɪɡnɪ.fəɪ]

Notice that in all of the words [ləɪ], [əɪ], [fəɪ] receive secondary stress. However, words with finally stressed syllables receive full stress as one would expect: *dʒʊlɪ* [ˈdʒʊ.ləɪ] “July” as well as *ɹɪlɪ* “rely” [ɹɪˈləɪ ~ ɹɪˈləɪ].

These examples are exceptional in his RMS and it is somewhat surprisingly that this has gone unnoticed in past studies of the RMS. It seems incontrovertible here that these pronunciations reflect his own Boston English showing his inability to eliminate traces of his native pronunciation. This also demonstrates that he pronounced these -y, -ly, -ity, -fy syllables in the conservative way throughout his life, even in England where, we can be certain, native-born Englishmen also pronounced it the same way.

It was certainly considered “provincial” because, in his RMS, he strives to respect the standard tendency of rendering -ly, -y, -ity spellings in the modern manner: [i], [li], [ɪti].

<i>aktuali</i>	[æktuæli]	“actually”	<i>graduali</i>	[gɹæduæli]	“gradually”
<i>afekʃɹnetli</i>	[æ'fekʃənɛtli]	“affectionately”	<i>hardli</i>	[hæɹdli]	“hardly”
<i>kaonsikuentli</i>	[kɔnsɪkuɛntli]	“consequently”	<i>Iteli</i>	[ɪtæli]	“Italy”
<i>kaəntinuali</i>	[kɔn'tɪnuæli]	“continually”	<i>lezfurli</i>	[lɛʒuɹli]	“leisurely”
<i>deli</i>	[dɛ:li]	“daily”	<i>onli</i>	[ɔnli]	“only”
<i>iizili</i>	[i:zili]	“easily”	<i>oridʒɪnali</i>	[ɔ'ɹɪdʒɪnæli]	“originally”
<i>færmərli</i>	[fɔɹmɛɹli]	“formerly”	<i>Pædi</i>	[pɔ:li]	“Polly”
<i>bizi</i>	[bɪzi]	“busy”	<i>pɹɹfɛktli</i>	[pɹæfɛktli]	“perfectly”
<i>tʃɛri</i>	[tʃɛɹi]	“cherry”	<i>meni</i>	[mɛni]	“many”
<i>gilti</i>	[gɪlti]	“guilty”	<i>ædredi</i>	[ɔ'lɛdi]	“already”
<i>dʒanueri</i>	[dʒænuæɹi]	“January”	<i>rapiditi</i>	[ɹæ'pɪdɪti]	“rapidity”

Given the evidence accrued in Part III, combined with these exceptional transcriptions recorded directly above, this demonstrates that Franklin continued to pronounce unstressed -ly, -y, -ity, etc. with diphthongal [ɹi] in this manner until his dying day. His RMS transcriptions demonstrate that he was sensitive to the rising innovative norm.

1.13 Franklin's Initial /u-/ (Orthographic <w>)

In Chapters 24, 26 and 27, we saw that Webster (1789: 86-87) described modern RP/GA /w/ as being pronounced short [u], precisely as Franklin interpreted it: “*W* has nearly the short sound of *oo*; for *will*, *dwel* are pronounced as if written *ooill*, *dooell*.” I interpret this to be in keeping with the formal style of pronunciation advocated by Franklin in his RMS. As mentioned previously, this feature has a parallel in spoken Welsh. Franklin's orthographic <u> was thus a weakly articulated [u] (*ei wraig* [i u'raɪg] “his wife”): *uel* [uɛl] (5 examples) “well,” *ui* [ui] “we” (10 examples), *uiiks* [ui:ks] “weeks,” *uil* [uil ~ uɪl] “will” (7 examples), *uif* [uiɹ] “wish,” *uiθ* [uiθ] “with” (5 examples, 1 case of *uið* followed by *ði*), *uiθaaut* [uiθɔut] “without.”

We have already seen examples of <u> + /ʌ/ (pronounced [ɹ] by the New Englanders) in *uɹn* [uɹn] “one” (2 examples) (Chaucer *oon*) and *uɹns* [uɹns] (2 examples). It is probable that this was the precise realization intended by some 17th-century English orthoepists. In informal connected speech, this [u-] was most likely reduced to [w-] and has now become the norm.

In Chapter 26, we read Webster's troubled remark about <w> before back vowels such as in "wool" or "wolf." Citing Perry, he had a hard time believing they would be pronounced [ul] and [ulf], "If *w* is a vowel, says he, then *wool*, *wolf*, will be pronounced *oo-ool*, *oo-olf*, or *ool*, *olf*." And yet that's precisely the way they were pronounced in large areas of England.

One of the most striking features in Franklin and Stevenson's transcriptions (suggesting that she also pronounced it this way) is the frequent transcription of "would" as both **uuld** and **uld** along with the retention of the postvocalic, preconsonantal /l/. Wright (1905, 684) gives the pronunciation of "would" as [ud] for Worcestershire, Shropshire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Bedfordshire, Essex, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Dorset and South Somerset, precisely as Franklin gives it here (but without [l]). Likewise, Wright (*ibid.*) gives [ud] as the pronunciation of "wood" for Worcestershire, Shropshire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset and Devon. "Woman" (*ibid.*) is given as [ʊmən] in roughly the same regions but also in Suffolk, Essex, Kent, Surrey and Sussex, all areas that supplied a steady stream of settlers to Massachusetts.

These are obviously conservatisms, and it is also clear this feature was also part of the colonial feature pool alongside [w-] pronunciations. See also Upton and Widdowson (1996, Map 18, *Wool*) which provides an affirmative answer to Perry and Webster's question above.³

We saw numerous traces of this in Wright (1905, 690) who records pronunciations in southern Scotland for "write" [wəreit] and [wreit] and even [vrɔit] in Somerset, showing a shift from [w] > [v] before /r/. These preserve reflexes of this earlier [u-] before /r/, pronunciations which were common in various areas of Britain until the first half of the 20th century. I saw no trace of this in the RMS, however.

To conclude, I estimate that Franklin and his compatriots must have pronounced it as a faint [u], particularly in careful speech which, once again, was the whole point of his reform, that is, to help the uneducated to acquire a variety of English that would assist them in integrating higher levels of society.

1.14 Massachusetts Retroflex or Approximant vs Trilled /r/

I stated in Chapter 27 that, in both New England and London, the rule for "polite" speakers was to pronounce /r/ in all positions. Quoting Dobson (1968, 945) I also pointed out that Wallis, Wilkins, Newton, Holder and Cooper all described a trilled realization of /r/. Dobson suggests that the retroflex pronunciation probably arose after the 14th century. Significantly, however, Franklin provides

3 I was initially unable to obtain access to this book. My sincere thanks to Joan Beal for having furnished me with a copy of this map.

two descriptions of /r/. To repeat and to summarize:

Table 1 (Franklin, 1779, 468): /n/, /t/, /d/ and /r/ are “formed more forward, by the forepart of the tongue against the roof of the mouth.”

My analysis here is that this probably applies only to the three consonants, /n/, /t/ and /d/, but not to /r/. His statement in Table 3 seems to demonstrate this.

Table 3 (Franklin, 1779, 470b): /r/ is described as “the same” (as /n/) except that “the Tip of the Tongue a *little looser or separate from the Roof of the Mouth* (my italics), and vibrating.” We saw in the last chapter that, in the 1768 version of this table, “and vibrating” is absent.

Given that Wise did not have access to the 1768 version of these tables, he understood (as I did initially) that “and vibrating” meant that /r/ was a trill or flap in all positions and that “Franklin must have trilled even the postvocalic r” in words such as “murmur” (Wise, 1948, 119). Nevertheless, the fact that Franklin specifies that “the Tip of the Tongue is a *little looser or separate* from the Roof of the Mouth” cannot possibly refer to a trilled realization but rather an approximant or retroflex (cf. Chapter 27 for more details). Moreover, the key word he gives for /r/ in Table 2 is “art” where /r/ appears post-vocally and in a context in which some Massachusetts elided /r/ altogether, as among the older vernacular today, i.e. “art” [a:t].

I indicated that this interpretation of Franklin's /r/ corresponds well to MacMahon's analyses of Sheridan and Kenrick's descriptions of /r/. Sheridan writes, “Er is formed by a *vibrating motion of the tip of the tongue* between the upper and lower jaw, *without touching either*” (my italics) (Sheridan, 1786, 67, quoted in MacMahon, 1998, 488). Kenrick describes the “tip of the palate, bending it back as it were towards the throat, emitting at the same time a strong breath through the mouth which causes a *trepidation of the tongue* (my italics) so suspended; and of course a jarring, tremulous sound” (Kenrick, 1784, 48, quoted in MacMahon, 1998, 488). MacMahon concludes that this can only be “a postalveolar or retroflex sound.” I agree.

I then referred to Jonson's description of /r/ as the “Dog's letter” and suggested that his “trembling about the teeth” could tie in with the Sheridan and Franklin's “vibrating” and Kenrick's “trepidation” which, in fact, occurs in the larynx or pharyngeal area of the throat. The “Dog's letter,” combined with vibrating and trepidation could refer simply to the growling [əɪɪɪɪɪ ~ əɪɪɪɪɪɪ] sound of strongly retroflex /r/. I doubt that even a frenetically articulated apico-alveolar trill would convincingly reproduce the sound of a growling dog!

I went on to argue that the dominant pronunciation of /r/ in North America was probably this approximant [ɹ] or retroflex [ɻ] in all positions where it appears etymologically. This is the pronunciation that has been adopted for GA

and is another inheritance from older British English. Nevertheless, we saw from the 17th-century town records that r-loss was already quite widespread in New England, at least in the paritary register of that koine (Chapter 23). Interestingly, Webster does not seem to consider r-loss to be a characteristic of New England English but rather of Virginia, perhaps the landed gentry, who he claims “almost omit” /r/. By almost, he could be referring to [ə] as in [wɛə ~ wɛp] for “ware” and [ðɛə ~ ðɛp] for “there.”

Some of the southern people, particularly in Virginia, almost omit the sound of *r* as in *ware*, *there*. In the best English pronunciation, the sound of *r* is much softer than in some of the neighboring languages, particularly the Irish and Spanish; and probably much softer than in the ancient Greek. But there seems to be no good reason for omitting the sound altogether; nor can the omission be defended on the ground, either of good practice or of rules. It seems to be a habit contracted by carelessness. (Webster, 1789, 110)

In passing, this is yet another example of the various American koine English speakers recognizing the speech of their compatriots at an early date, proving that the koinés were fully established by the beginning of the 18th centuries.

Getting back to our discussion, like Franklin, Webster was a prescriptivist and the pronunciations of the lower levels of society were avoided by both men. Franklin transcribes /r/ in all relevant positions in his RMS.

1.15 Massachusetts and the Conservation of /l/ + C: ld / lm

We also saw that velar [ɫ] tended to be vocalized before final stops, fricatives and nasals (as in French) in words such as *calm* *palm*, *half*, and *walk*, *talk* (but not *balk*, *skulk*, etc.). It was also elided in *could*, *would*, *should*, etc. The vocalization appears to have begun during the 15th century (Dobson, 1968, 988), a tendency which would have expanded during the 16th century and continued throughout the 17th century.

I have wondered whether this tendency may have been partially inspired even earlier by Norman French speakers who systemically vocalized their postvocalic /l/. For example, Old French *falte* gave *faute* “fault.” This may have contributed to the tendency in English. The French loanword *veau* “calf” (i.e. “veal”) was originally pronounced [vɛ:l] in Old French. Note that /l/ is preserved in the word *vêler*, “to calve,” i.e. “give birth to a calf.” ME [vɛ:l] > [vi:l] “veal.” The loss of /l/ was not systematic in English and clearly did not occur to the same degree in all dialects, and we have seen examples where /l/ in these environments is still pronounced.

A case in point is Franklin’s spellings of “could,” “would,” “should” and “calm,” which suggest that he pronounced preconsonantal [-ld]: **kuld**, **uuld**, **fuld**. Significantly, both Franklin and Stevenson conserve the <ld> in these words. We

also saw that Wise (1948, 120) wondered whether Franklin's pronunciation of /l/ here may have represented vocalized [ɔ]. This suggestion is to be set aside given that the vocalization in this environment would have led to vocalic assimilation. Wise himself concludes by stating this. Note too that Stevenson only gives the complete **uuld** spelling (possibly representing [uold]?) whereas Franklin occasionally reduces it to **uld** [uld ~ ɔld].

We also saw that Franklin retains [lm] in his transcription of **kalm**, a word he almost certainly pronounced [kælm]. This appears confirmed on the basis of relic pronunciations in both Appalachia (Hall, 1942) and on Tangier Island (Chesapeake Bay) where [kæ(:)m] was recorded in both places. Recall that David Shores (1984) gives another more common example of [l] before [m] for Tangier Island, which he transcribes as [kɔlm]. Similarly, Shorrocks (1998) shows the retention of [l] before consonants in Lancashire English where it normally disappears in RP (cf. Chapter 19). Given Franklin's systematic use of <l> in such contexts, it seems probable that this was the veritable pronunciation Franklin believed to be most appropriate in "polite" company.

1.16 Massachusetts /ŋ/ vs /ŋg/

Here we consider whether Franklin pronounced <ng> and <nk> with [ŋ] or [ŋg] / [ŋk]. We saw in Chapters 22 and 23 that both Franklin and Stevenson transcribe <nc> <nk> sequences literally as [nk], **inkaənvi(i)niens**, rather than accounting for velar assimilation of the nasal preceding /k/, **ŋk** [ŋk]. One explanation for this was that Franklin intended each word to be pronounced clearly aloud syllabically and these transcriptions represent hypercorrections. One transcription offered in his July 20th letter is intriguing, namely, **ŋlɪf** ['ɪŋlɪf] for "English" rather than ['ɪŋɡlɪf]. Although the practice is variable in Modern English varieties (['sɪŋɡə(ɪ)] in northern England), there were not enough examples in Franklin's corpus to draw a definitive conclusion.

1.17 Massachusetts /t/ > [t̚]

I have found no examples in Franklin's RMS or in his poetry suggesting that he lenited intervocalic /t/ > [t̚], as is generally the case in American English today. Other than spelling it as <d>, I cannot see how he would have indicated it. Given the widespread nature of this pronunciation in America, parts of England and Northern Ireland today it most certainly existed in colonial times. In fact, Orbeck (1927) provides a number of attestations of its existence in the 17th-century Massachusetts town records: **carpenders** ['kæɪpɛnt̚ɪz] (Groton, 1665), **carepindur** ['kæɪpɪnt̚ɪ] "carpenter(s)" (Watertown, 1674), **compadent** ['kɒmpɛt̚ɛnt] "competent" (Dedham, 1661), **marchindabll** ['mæɪt̚fɪndəbɔ̃]

“merchantable” (Groton, 1683) and *inhabid(ants)* [ɪn'hæbɪdənts] “inhabitants” (Groton, 1681)... (cf. Chapter 23). The pronunciation was certainly current but, then as now, probably viewed as substandard by educated speakers.

1.18 Massachusetts, Non-Palatalization of /t ~ d ~ k ~ g ~ n/ before <i>, <e> or <u>

In Chapter 23, we pointed out that words such as “Tuesday,” “tune,” “dew” and “new” were not palatalized in New England English. I quoted Görlach (2012), who claimed that this phenomenon developed in America. I indicated, however, that the same pronunciation is also attested today for *Tuesday*, *tune*, *dew* and *news* in East Anglia and in scattered areas around London and other regions of England today (cf. Widdowson and Upton 1996) and used this as evidence to suggest that its presence in American English is not a North American innovation at all but a common English dialectal inheritance.

Franklin and Stevenson both transcribe **nu** for “new” twice (and not *niu*) suggesting it was accepted in educated London English as well. Note also his spelling of *djanueri* [ˈdʒænu.ɛ.ɹi]. Compare these examples from those provided by the town records: *Jenery* [ˈdʒɛnɛ.ɹi] (Watertown, 1654), *Genewar* [ˈdʒɛnɛ.wæ.ɹ] (Groton, 1681). This last example seems to preserve the ME /eu/ pronunciation. Note too the clerk who recorded Franklin’s birth: *Benjamen Son of Josiah Frankling⁴ & Abiah his Wife born 6 Janry 1706*, [ˈdʒæn.ɹi] (cf. Chapter 19).

Interestingly, in medial position, we observe numerous examples where the glide is absent in words where it is present in GA or RP. For instance, we see that Franklin transcribes “continually” as *kaantinu^uali* [kɔnˈtɪnuəli] and “continued” as *kaantinu^d* [kɔnˈtɪnuɒd] rather *kaanˈtɪnu^uali* and *kaanˈtɪnu^d*. Note also his transcriptions of “natural” and “centuries” as *natural* [ˈnætʃu.əl] and *senturiz* [ˈsɛntʃu.ɹiːz]. Other RMS examples of this kind are *aktuali* [ˈæktu.əli] “actually” and *gradu^uali* [ˈgrædu.əli] “gradually” where, both of these last words, [u] and [ə] are in hiatus. Finally, he realizes “particularly” as *partikularli* [ˌpæɪˈtɪku.læ.ɹli] “particularly” (in careful pronunciation). Combined with all the other data gleaned from various sources, these can only be interpreted as reflections of Franklin’s idiolect.

Nevertheless, his transcription of “natural” as *natural* [ˈnætʃu.əl] is contradicted by his transcription of “naturally” as *natfurali* [ˈnætʃə.ɹali] which may be an attempt to reproduce London pronunciation. Polly Stevenson, however, transcribes “accurate” as *akiuret*, suggesting that she favoured the

4 I see the spelling of Franklin with -ing here as a possible hypercorrection on the part of the clerk. New Englanders (cf. Lowell) and well-educated Englishmen commonly pronounced -ing [ɪn] and the scrivener may simply have wanted to reconstitute the name as he thought it “should be” pronounced.

palatalized variants (cf. below). Yet, like Franklin, she transcribes “new” as in American English, **nu** [nu:], a pronunciation also current in the London area.

Confirmation that Franklin's unpalatalized transcriptions may reflect his New England roots is found in Webster's 1789 *Dissertations on the English Language*, where he writes that

for in *nature*, *rapture*, and hundreds of other words, *t* is changed into *tsh*; and yet no person pretends that *u*, in these words, has a diphthongal sound... I believe no person ever pretended, that this sound of *u* contains the sound of *e* or *y*; why then should we be directed to pronounce *nature*, *natyur*? Or what is equally absurd, *natshur*? (Webster, 1789, 157)

A few pages later, he continues: “the true sound of *u* in ‘creature,’ ‘nature,’ ‘rapture,’ ‘legislature,’ etc. is the same as *liar*, *elder*, *factor*” (Webster 1789: 162). By this he means [nɛ:təɹ], [ɛlɔptəɹ] and [fɛdʒɪs,ɛ:təɹ] respectively. For Webster, *nature* pronounced with [tʃ], as is now the case in current GA and RP, was “barbarously harsh and inharmonious” (cf. Krapp, 1925, 237).

Franklin's pronunciations here are probably just the tip of the iceberg and he almost certainly shared the vernacular pronunciations provided by Lowell in his *Biglow Papers* (1848). Here are some of Lowell's examples. It goes without saying that these too are examples of continuity in English pronunciation from the Early Modern English period in the early American colonial period and onwards in 19th-century Massachusetts.

1.18.1 Lowell and the *Biglow Papers* (1848)

[p(ə) ~ pɪ] for [pjɪ]:

popylar	[ˈpɒpɪlə(ɹ)]	popular
pop'lar	[ˈpɒplə(ɹ)]	popular

[tu] for [tju]:

toon	[tu:n]	tune
constitooants	[ˌkɒnˈstɪtuənts]	constituent
constitootional	[ˌkɒnstɪtu(:)ʃənəl]	constitutional
institooshun	[ˌɪnstɪtu(:)ʃən]	institution
destitoot	[ˈdestɪtu:t]	destitute
oppertoon	[ˌɒpə(ɹ)ˈtu:n]	opportune
punctooal	[ˈpʌŋktuəl]	punctual

vartuous	[ˈva:(ɪ)tuəs]	virtuous
act'lly	[æktəli]...	actually
cent'ry	[ˈsent.ɪ]	century (rhyming with <i>entry</i>)
fortin'-makin'	[ˈfɒ(ɪ)tɪn,mɛ:kɪn]	constitutional
raptur	[ˈɹæpəɹ]	rapture
feeturs	[ˈfi:təɹz]	features (rhyming with <i>creeturs</i> [ˈkɹi:təɹz])
nater	[ˈnɛ:təɹ]	nature (rhyming with <i>traitor</i>)
pictur	[ˈpɪktəɹ]	picture (rhyming with <i>constrictor</i> [kənˈstɹɪktəɹ])

We have seen that this pronunciation, *nater* “nature” and *pictur* “picture,” was also shared by Dryden and Pope (Bowen, 1905) and these 19th-century New England examples provide yet another example of continuity of a kind we see in the Groton town records: *screptur* for “Scripture” (1704), etc.

<du> [dju]:

Lowell gives far fewer examples in this category: *dooty* [ˈdu:ti] for “duty,” *gradooally* [ˈgræduəli] for “gradually” (cf. just like Franklin’s *graduali* [ˈgrædu·ali] above) but also *indervidgewals* [ɪndə(ɪ)ˈvɪdʒwəlz], probably with an excrescent /r/ for “individuals” [ɪndəɹ].

[k(u)] for [kj]:

promiscoous	[pɹɒˈmiskuəs]	promiscuous
occ'pants	[ˈɒkəpənts]	occupants
pecooler	[pɛˈku:ləɹ]	peculiar
perpendicler	[ˌpə(ɪ)pənˈdɪkləɹ]	perpendicular
partickler	[pa(ɪ)ˈtɪkləɹ]	particular

*In context, Lowell rhymes “particular” [pa(ɪ)ˈtɪkləɹ] with “tickle her” [ˈtɪkələɹ].

These last two are commonly heard in rapid speech in the US.

<gu> [gɹ ~ g(u)]:

reggilar	[ˈɹɛgɪləɹ]	regular
reg'lar	[ˈɹɛgləɹ]	regular
argiments	[ˈa(ɪ)gɪmənts]	arguments
figgers	[ˈfɪgəɹz]	figures

Likewise, *reglar* and *figger* are still pronounced the same way in modern

vernacular American English in contexts such as “I figger he’s about 80 now!” or “She has a nice “figger on her,” “facts and figgers,” “Figger it out for yourself!”... Likewise, *partickler*, *perpendickler* and *reglar* are also still in common use in informal American English.

[nu] for [nju]:

noo	[nu:]	new
annooal	[ˈænuəl]	annual
insinooations	[ɪnˌsmuːeːʃənz]	insinuations

We have seen that both Stevenson and Franklin transcribe “new” as nu [nu(:)]. Lack of palatalization after word-initial consonants in words such as “Tuesday,” “dew,” etc. are still common to the south of London, parts of Norfolk and in areas of the Southwest of England (Upton and Widdowson, 1996). This is clearly not an American innovation as is often stated.

1.18.2 Miscellaneous Examples

issoo	[ˈisu]	issue
valooable	[ˈvæluəbl]	valuable
vally	[ˈvæli]	value
victor’ous	[ˈvɪktɔːrəs]	victorious
*But: <i>sodger</i>	[ˈsɒdʒəɹ]	soldier

Considering the relatively high number of examples of this kind in Franklin’s RMS (a corpus of only 400+ words), in addition to their attestation in earlier 17th-century English poetry, one can be confident that the feature outlined in Lowell’s text in 1848 were part and parcel of the same paritary register during the 17th and 18th centuries, hence another example of continuity between England, early American colonial England and 19th-century New England non-standard English.

1.18.3 Some Examples of Palatalization

There are some exceptions to this tendency, such as Stevenson’s *akiuret* “accurate” rather than the expected New England *akuret*. This seems to show that their pronunciation differed to some degree with regard to this class of word. Another example is Franklin’s *familiyr* “familiar,” probably representing formal, deconstructed [fæ] + [ˈmil] + [iː] + [əɹ] with [iːəɹ] in hiatus, [fæˈmili-əɹ] (paritary register, [fæˈmɪljəɹ]).

As we have just seen above, the use of [i] or [ɛ] as glides or palatal [j] following an initial consonant was not commonplace in 18th-century New England... Where it did exist, it was expressed in the form of a vowel [i] or [ɛ], mainly before bilabial or labiodental fricatives where Franklin does transcribe the glide after labiodental /f/ and bilabial stop /p/, which he writes as <i> or <e>. I have found only three examples of this type in his RMS: **fiu** [fru ~ fiu] for “few,” which Grandgent interprets as *fiû* [fiu:], but also **feurius** “furious,” pronounced [fɛuri-us]) and, finally, **piur** [piuɹ] for “pure.” *Few*, realized as [fru ~ fiu], is also attested in Welsh English, but this appears to be largely due to substratal Welsh-language influence.

Contrary to Webster (1789, 154) and MacMahon (1998, 404-405), Grandgent (1899, 224) transcribes Franklin’s **nu** “new,” **rul** “rule” and **tru** “true” (3 examples) as *nû* [nu:], *rûl* [ɹu:], *trû* [tɹu:] (<û> representing long [u:]). As we have seen, although Franklin says nothing about his **u** being long, only rounded (cf. Chapter 26). Nor does he describe it as [triu] or [trɛu]. But the fact that Franklin’s key words for his <u> character are *tool* and *rule* suggest that they may indeed have been long, just as it is in contemporary GA. Krapp (1925) showed that many New England <oo> words were short, however.

Webster offers a rather unclear discussion of what he describes as the “true Saxon” pronunciation of this vowel, which appears to be [ɹu] and which MacMahon’s analyzes similarly.

The notation [ɹu:] obscures a number of slightly different pronunciations. In a word like “you,” and depending on the speech at which it is said, the /ju:/ sequence might be reanalysed phonetically as a rising or a falling diphthong [iɹu:] or [ɹü:].... This has implications for the phonotactics: e.g. Webster’s “truth” would have been phonemically /trju:θ/, but phonetically [tɹiü:θ] or [tɹü:θ]. (MacMahon, 1998, 404)

However, as just indicated above, Franklin does have this [ɹu] but also [ɛu] in the following words: **fiu** [fiu:], **piur** [piuɹ] and **feurius** [fɛuri-us]). I can only assume that Franklin’s own transcription of **tru** [tɹu(:)] is precisely what he intended and is a simple variant common on both sides of the Atlantic.

I found no evidence in Franklin’s or Stevenson’s transcriptions of <ki> or <gi> in words such as “cart” ***kiart**, or “guard” ***giard**. Considering Franklin’s mockery of the New England and New Jersey pronunciations of “cow” as *keow* (1739), this is not surprising (cf. Chapter 14). Webster (1789, 109-110) expresses precisely the same contempt for this [kj- ~ kɛ-]/[gj- ~ gɛ-] pronunciation, describing it as representative of “the same barbarous dialect” and “yet, strange as it may seem, it is the elegant pronunciation of the fashionable people both in England and America.”

Thus in order to pronounce *cow*, *power*, or *gown* with propriety, the pupil should be taught, after placing the organs in the position required by the first consonant,

to open his mouth wide, before he begins the sound of *ow*: Otherwise in passing from that position to the aperture necessary to pronounce *ow*, he will inevitably articulate *ee*, *keow*.

In this next passage, he expresses his frustration that this realization should be favoured by the English and American elites.

A similar method is recommended to those polite speakers who are so fond of imitating the English stage pronunciation as to embrace every singularity, however disagreeable. I refer to the very modern pronunciation of *kind*, *sky*, *guide*, &c. in which we hear the short *e* before *i*, *keind*, or *kyind*, *skey*, &c. This is the same barbarous dialect, as the *keow* and *veow* of the eastern country people. Yet, strange as it may seem, it is the elegant pronunciation of the fashionable people both in England and America. Even Sheridan, who has laid it down as a rule that *i* is a diphthong, composed of *aw* and *ee*, has prefixed a *y* short to its sound in several words; as *kyind*, *skyi*, *gyide*, &c. We may with equal propriety prefix *e* to the diphthong *ow*, or to *o* in *poll*, or to *oo* in *fool*, or to any other vowel. It is presumed that the bare mention of such barbarisms will be sufficient to restrain their progress, both in New England and on the British theatre. (Webster, 1789, 109-110)

All these examples demonstrate how common post-consonantal [ɛ] and [i] actually were. Later in his *Dissertations*, Webster continues his rant.

In passing from that close compression occasioned by *k* and *g*, to the aperture necessary to form any vowel, the organs are necessarily placed in a situation to pronounce *ee*. From this single circumstance, have originated the most barbarous dialects or singularities in speaking English, which offend the ear, either in Great Britain or America. This is the origin of the New England *keow*, *keoward*; and of the English *keube*, *ackeuse*, *keind* and *geuide*. (1789, 154-155)

We have already seen, however, that Walker (1791, 12) advocates the pronunciation of this glide-vowel: “When preceded by gutturals, hard *g* or *c*, it is, in polite pronunciation, softened by the intervention of a sound like *e*, so that *card*, *cart*, *guard*, *regard*, are pronounced like *ke-ard*, *ke-art*, *ghe-ard*, *re-gh-eard*.” Citing its use in Steele’s *Grammar* (p. 49), Walker declares that this “proves it is not the offspring of the present day.” He thus accepted and advocated such pronunciations on the grounds that they were well-established and thus “venerable.” This is another example demonstrating that American and English sociolinguistic visions of language propriety were beginning to diverge. One final citation from Webster confirms this:

For similar reasons, the labials, *m* and *p*, are followed by *e*: In New England, we hear it in *meow*, *peower*, and in Great Britain, in *meute*, *peure*. With this difference however, that in New England, this pronunciation is generally confined to the more illiterate part of the people, and in Great Britain it prevails among those of the first rank. (Webster, 1789, 155)

As Franklin’s contemporary and avowed successor in the spelling reform campaign, Webster’s testimonies regarding the pronunciations of different segments of society are priceless. Franklin undoubtedly conversed with people who shared these variant pronunciations on a daily basis, both in America and in England. Having said that, it may be that Webster may have considered Franklin’s pronunciations of words like *feurius* for “furious” and *tru* for “true” to be incorrect or even vulgar. On the contrary, Franklin may have introduced these vowel glides thinking they were more sophisticated and sounding more like his London neighbours, friends and acquaintances.

Nevertheless, we have seen that the pronunciation of words like *piur* and *fiu* appear to correspond to the realizations Webster advocates for his “Saxon” <oo> sound, namely [iu: ~ ru:].

1.19 Morphemes and Pseudo-Morphemes: be-, de-, di-, dis-, re-

Franklin quite systematically transcribes these words using his single <i> character. Some of these words are still pronounced with tense [i] in vernacular American English alongside GA [ɪ]:

BE-	DE-
<i>bikaaz</i> [bi'kə(:)z] “because” <i>bikəm</i> [bi'kəm] “become” <i>biginiŋ</i> [bi'giniŋ] “beginning” <i>bisɪdz</i> [bi'sɪdz] “beside” <i>biliiv</i> [bi'li:v] “believe” <i>bituiin</i> [bi'twi:n] “between” (x 2)	<i>difendiŋ</i> [di'fendiŋ] “defending” <i>digriis</i> [di'gri:z] “degrees” <i>ditɜrmined</i> [di'tə.mɪnd] “determined” <i>divɪn</i> [di'vɪn] “divine”

However, the modern American tendency is to pronounce di- and dis- in the following words with lax [ɪ]. This may not have been the case during Franklin’s lifetime, however:

DI-	DIS-
<i>difɪrent</i> [di'fə.ɪənt] “different” (x 2) <i>difɪkɪlt</i> [di'fi,kɪlt] “difficult” <i>difɪkɪlti</i> [di'fi,kɪlti] “difficulty” (x 5) <i>difɪkɪltis</i> [di'fi,kɪltiz] “difficulties” (x 7)	<i>*distɪrɪd</i> [di'stɪrɪd] “destroyed” <i>*distɪraɪd</i> [di'stɪɔɪd] “destroyed” <i>diskɔrs</i> [dis,kɔ.ɹs ~ 'dis,kɔ.ɹs?] “discourse” <i>distɪŋkfɪn</i> [di'stɪŋkfən] “distinction” (x 3)

In all of the following examples, the American vernacular often has [i]:

RE-
<i>riflekts</i> [ˌɹiˈflekts] “reflects”
<i>rifjɪns</i> [ˌɹiˈfɪnz] “refines”
<i>rilɛʃʊn</i> [ˌɹiˈlɛːʃən] “relation”
<i>rilidʃʊn</i> [ˌɹiˈlɪdʒən] “religion”
<i>rilɪ</i> [ˌɹiˈlɪ] “rely”

Note, however, that Franklin's *refaarmɛʃʊn* [ˌɹɛfəɹˌmɛ(:)ʃən] with initial [ˌɹɛf-] is just as in GA. In addition, as with *rilɛʃʊn* [ˌɹiˈlɛːʃən], one would have expected the stressed syllable of “reformation” to have long [ɛː ~ ɛ:] here as well, i.e. *refaarmɛʃʊn* [ˌɹɛfəɹˌmɛːʃən]. The *aar* spelling is interesting in that reformation had not yet been centralized in his idiolect.

1.20 Word-Final Morphemes

- ING	-Y
<i>tʃɛndʃɪŋ</i> [tʃɛndʒɪŋ] “changing”	<i>gilti</i> [ˈgilti] “guilty”
<i>bɪɡɪnɪŋ</i> [bɪˈɡɪnɪŋ] “beginning”	<i>kaɒntrɛrɪ</i> [ˈkɒntɹɛɹi] “contrary”
<i>bɹɪŋɪŋ</i> [bɹɪŋɪŋ] “bringing”	<i>etɪmɒlədʒi</i> [ɛtɪˈmɒlədʒi] “etymology”
	<i>etɪmɒlədʒɪz</i> [ɛtɪˈmɒlədʒɪz] “etymologies” (x 3)

Franklin gives no examples with *in* in any of his transcriptions, despite the fact that contemporary witnesses stress that [ɪn] was the common pronunciation in natural speech in both America and England. We saw what appears to be an example of hypercorrection by the Boston clerk who registered Franklin's birth by spelling his name “Frankling.” The prestigious pronunciation by this time was now -ing, but many speakers were uncertain as to where to pronounce it.

-LY [li] and not [lɪ ~ ləi])
<i>lezʃʊɹli</i> [ˈlɛʒʊɹli] “leisurely”
<i>aktuali</i> [ˈæktuˌa.li] “actually”
<i>afɛkʃʊnɛtli</i> [aˈfɛkʃənɛtli] “affectionately”
<i>kaɒnsikʊɛntli</i> [ˈkɒnsɛkʊɛntli] “consequently” (x 2)
<i>kaɒntɪnuəli</i> [kɒnˈɪnuˌa.li] “continually”
<i>iizili</i> [iːzili] “easily”
<i>fɑɹmɛɹli</i> [ˈfɒɹmɛɹli] “formerly”
<i>ɡɹæduəli</i> [ɡɹæduˌa.li] “gradually” (x 2)
<i>hɑɹdli</i> [ˈhæɹdli] “hardly” (x 2)
<i>nætʃʊəli</i> [ˈnætʃəɹali] “naturally”
<i>onli</i> [ˈɹnli] “only” (x 6)
<i>pɑɹtɪkʊləɹli</i> [pɑɹˈtɪkʊləɹli] “particularly”

Recall Franklin's rhyme of *manfully* ['mænfə,ləi] ~ *die* [dri] (1738) (Chapter 16) in his Blackbeard poem. Composed in what he described as a "Grub-street-ballad-style," it was published in Boston in 1719 when he was only thirteen years of age and thus undoubtedly mirrors the local vernacular in that year. We saw that his *lyi* transcription for <-ly> is found in a few other words in his RMS, including *huryiij* ['hʁɪi·iŋ] and *perfektlyi* ['pɛɪfɛkt,ləi] and is an inadvertent transcription error reflecting his natural Boston pronunciation (cf. above). Multiple examples of this regularly appears in his *Poor Richard* poems, even in unstressed syllables.

2. Vocalic Reduction in Unstressed Words and Syllables

In Part III, we saw numerous examples of vocalic reduction in unstressed syllables in the New England and New York town records, for example, *dackn* ['dækŋ ~ 'de:kŋ] for "deacon"... In that context, we saw that Isaac Newton also transcribed examples of words with syllabic consonants such as *etn* ['etŋ] for "eaten," *abl* ['ɛ(:)bɿ] for "able," *wakn* ['wɛ(:)kŋ] for "waken" and *hapm* ['hæ(:)pŋ] for "happen," with this last example showing forward assimilation (Dobson, 1968, 252).⁵

Nevertheless, I concluded that, generally speaking, Franklin avoids doing this, probably on the grounds that he intended his system to assist learners to read aloud and thus to pronounce words syllabically in a distinct and correct manner. This included normally unstressed words and syllables. He states this very clearly to the trustees of the Philadelphia Academy as one of the fundamental exercises he had imagined for his "English School." Here he refers to a certain Mr. Dove who had taught grammar and elocution in Cirencester for sixteen years.

He [Dove] had a good voice, read perfectly well, *with proper accent and just pronunciation* (my italics) and his method of communicating habits of the same kind to his pupils was this: When he gave a lesson to one of them, *he always first read it to him aloud, with all the different modulations of voice that the subject and sense required* (my italics). (Franklin to the Trustees of the Philadelphia Academy, June 1789)

With regard to <a> in final syllables, for instance, Nares (1784, 11) writes the following.

In final syllables, unaccented, the rapidity of pronunciation gives to this vowel as indeed to the others also, an obscure sound, not clearly referable to any class of

5 As an adolescent, I clearly recall hearing speakers of all ages in Virginia pronouncing the chain-store "Seven-Eleven" ['sɛbm'lebm]. "Captain" and "happen" are still pronounced in the American vernacular as ['kæp'm] and ['hæp'm]. *He dudn't* (doesn't) *do nothin* beside *He don't do nothin* were also commonly heard.

vowel sounds; yet sufficiently so to be marked by a careful speaker, and perceived by an accurate ear; as in *advantage*, *colloquial*, *ballad*, *collar*, *regular*, *distance*, *carcass*, &c.

Before *r* the true sound of *a* is least distinguishable; and the sound used resembles more that of short <u> as if it were *collur* &c..

Here, Nares is most probably referring to [əɪ ~ ə]. It is precisely with these kinds of obscure sounds that Franklin struggled.

Franklin's systematic transcriptions of unstressed syllables as if they were fully pronounced can be explained by his desire to ensure that words should be articulated with the utmost clarity. In his *Autobiography*, he was awed by the oratorical brilliance of Rev. Whitefield's sermons (cf. Chapter 4), writing that the latter had "a loud and clear voice, and *articulated his words and sentences so perfectly*, that he might be heard and understood at a great distance..." He goes on to stress that "*every accent, every emphasis, every modulation of voice, was so perfectly well turn'd and well plac'd*" that it was "*a pleasure of much the same kind with that receiv'd from an excellent piece of musick...*" (BE, pp. 104-105). In Chapter 11, we saw that in 18th-century France, a similar attempt to impose clear enunciative techniques was the fashion in Paris.

2.1 -sion, -tion, -cion [ʃən]

In the 16th and 17th centuries <-tion>, <-sion>, <-cion> were realized as [siən] (cf. Wilkins' "Apostles Creed," e.g. [p.rəʊnsiəs] "Pontius (Pilate)," [ɹɛsʊˈrɛksiən] "resurrection," Chapter 13). Franklin and Stevenson systematically transcribe words with these spellings as **ʃyn** [ʃən]. These are "constraining endings," meaning that the syllable directly preceding them takes primary stress. As we have indicated, they were already commonly pronounced [ʃən] and [ʃɪ] in the 17th- and 18th-century vernaculars, just as in Modern English. The examples are too numerous to reproduce here (cf. Appendix 3). Here are a few examples:

reførmeʃyn	[rɛfɔ.r'mɛ(:)ʃən]	"reformation"
impørʃekʃyn	[ɪmpə.r'fɛkʃən]	"imperfection"
mənʃyn	[ˈmɛnʃən]	"mention"
distɪnkʃyn	[dɪs'tɪŋkʃən]	"distinction" (3 examples)
iidifʃyns	[i:'dɪʃənʃ]	"editions" (Stevenson)
impørʃekʃyn	[ɪmpə.r'fɛkʃən]	"imperfection"
pronʏnsiefʃyn	[p.rɔ.p.nɔnsi'ɛ(:)ʃən]	"pronunciation" (2 examples)

In this last example, stressed [ɛ] should perhaps have been transcribed with his doubled **ee** characters or **ê** and pronounced [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] as he does in "relation."

<i>rilêſyn</i>	[.ɹi'leːʃən]	“relation”
<i>refaarmeſyn</i>	[.rɛfəɹ'mɛ(:)ʃən]	“reformation”

Here too, this is also probably a slip for [rɛfəɹ'mɛːʃən], hence, *reformêſyn*.

<i>ɒbdjekſyn</i>	[.ɒb'dʒɛkʃən]	“objection”
<i>rilidſyn</i>	[.ɹi'lidʒən]	“religion”
<i>afekſynetli</i>	[a'fɛkʃə,nɛtli]	“affectionately”

This last word is interesting in that it ends with <-ate>, another constraining ending that imposes that primary stress should fall on the antepenultimate. The <-ly> ending is neutral (meaning its presence does affect the stress patterns), hence [a'fɛkʃə,nɛt] and *afekſynetli* [a'fɛkʃə,nɛtli]. Lowell also gives a host of examples spelt *shun*, such as *soshiashun* [sɔʃi'eːʃən] “association,” *refleekshuns* [ri'flekʃənz] “reflections”... Also note Franklin’s transcription of -gion preceded by [dʒ]: *rilidſyn* [ri'lidʒən].

2.2 <-on>, <-ond>, <-ant>, <-ent>...

Franklin appears to be unsure how to transcribe unstressed final syllables. Since he was striving to provide a prestigious disparitary pronunciation for learners of his new orthography, he often adopts many of the same faulty strategies followed by the 17th-century New England clerks who preceded him. For instance, note the *-yn*, *-end*, *-ant* spellings for in “Saxon,” “second,” “confident,” “different” or “servant” which he transcribes respectively as *Saksyn* ['sæksən], *as one would have expected, but also sekend* ['sekənd], *kɒnfident* ['kɒnfɪdɛnt], *difyrɛnt* ['dɪfəɹɛnt] (2 examples) and *ſyrvant* ['səɹvənt]. Had he had more time to review his system, he might have preferred to render these as *Saksyn* ['sæksən], *sekynd* ['sekənd], *ſyrvynt* ['səɹvənt], *kɒnfidynt* ['kɒnfɪdənt], *difurynt* ['dɪfəɹənt] and *ſyrvynt* ['səɹvənt]. Again, the explanation for these “full” pronunciations are probably due to his obsession with pronouncing each syllable as fully and as clearly as possible.

This instability in his system is corroborated by three different transcriptions of “present” which appear respectively as *present*, the <s> spelling clearly an error. It is corrected in his second transcription: *prezent* [pɹɛzɛnt] (4 examples). He also writes *prezaant*, literally, [pɹɛzənt]. Here again, this strikes me to be an awkward attempt to transcribe [ə]. If so, it would have been better represented

by *prezunt*, literally, [ˈpɹɛzənt] which Stevenson does when she writes *kaamyn* [ˈkɑmən] for “common” in her September 26th manuscript draft to Franklin. However, Stevenson transcribes this as *komin* [ˈkɑmɪn] in Vaughan's 1779 edition reflecting the natural pronunciation and that of the majority of speakers at the time but in England and in the colonies.

2.3 Final Unstressed <-ble> and <-age>

Contrary to Isaac Newton (circa. 1661), who fully accepts syllabic consonants, *etn*, *abl*, *wakn*, both Franklin and Stevenson feel compelled to introduce an epenthetic vowel in the final unstressed syllable as follows: *piipil* [ˈpiːpɪl] “people,” *ebil* [ˈɛːbɪl] “able” and *impossibil* [ɪmˈpɒsɪbɪl] “impossible” and so on. It is not unreasonable to imagine that, in all these contexts, he felt a non-velar [l] would have been “lighter” and perhaps more refined. Likewise, “easily,” which is realized [ˈiːzəli] in GA, would have been pronounced *iizili* [ˈiːzɪli] by Franklin in careful pronunciation. We have seen clear evidence from spellings in the New England town records.

The case of the final unstressed <-age> (pseudo-)morpheme offers another interesting example, which both Franklin and Stevenson transcribe as [ɛdʒ] as in *viledʃ* [ˈvɪlɛdʒ] “village,” *advantedʃez* [ˈædˌvæntɛdʒɪz] “advantages,” *languedʃ* [ˈlæŋgwɛdʒ] “languages” (3 occurrences) and *iusedʃ* “usage.” Today, in GA, one would tend to hear [-ɪdʒ] in all these examples. Note also his transcription of “carriages” as *karidʃes* [ˈkæɪdʒɛs] which supports the idea that the [ɛdʒ] realization was considered to be more appropriate in the disparitary register, while [ɪdʒ] may have been more common in more relaxed, paritary conversation.

3. Franklin's Proto-Phonemic RMS Inventory: An Overview

3.1 The Vocalic System

In section 2 of Chapter 27, I presented an outline of the major characteristics of Franklin's RMS vocalic system. I stated that his approach was founded on the existence of seven vowel phonemes, but twelve phonemes if one takes into account the contrast between long and short vowels. Franklin himself distinguished between

- long <*ii*> /iː/ contrasting with short <*i*> /i/ [ɪ ~ i ~ iː];
- long <*ee*> or <*ê*> /ɛː/ [ɛ(:) ~ ɛ̃(:)] contrasting with short <*e*> /ɛ/.

The implication is that they are identical qualitatively. In other words, Franklin presents his vowel system in the same way as in Middle English, that vowel length determined its phonemic status, not the quality of the vowel. Whether this scheme represents his personal pronunciation or whether it is a theoretical simplification of reality was the topic of discussion in the preceding chapters. In many respects, I believe it does reflect his interpretation of English phonology of the time.

His <aa> symbol represents /ɒ(:)/ [ɒ(:) ~ ɑ(:)]. On the face of it, <aa> appears inherently long. As with Franklin's *y*, the idea may have come from Wilkins' <α> character and he may thus have combined the two fused or "Siamese" <α> + <α> to represent [ɑ: ~ ɒ:]. Having said this, there are counterarguments for this.

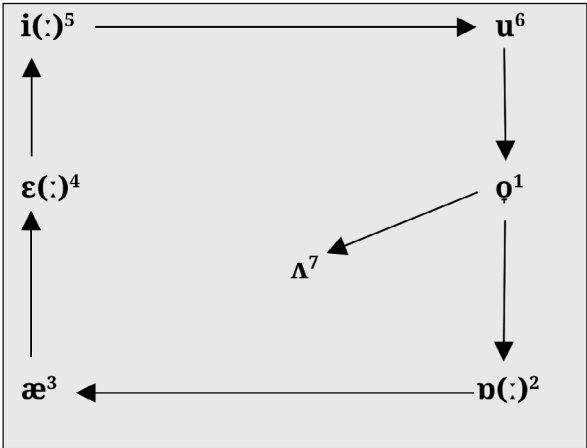
First, if <aa> is inherently long, why would he and Polly spell double it <aaaa> to transcribe *aaal* "all." The implication is that the vowel is particularly long before labials. The second counterargument is that he contrasted long and short [ɒ(:) ~ ɑ(:)] before labials and nasal [n]. Folly and John [ɒ ~ ɑ] and *ball, fall, awl* [ɒ: ~ ɑ:]. We must conclude that this vowel was inherently designed to represent both long and short vowels (i.e. the short version being slightly longer than the true short vowels like his *y*).

In Chapter 26, we saw that Franklin does not distinguish between long and short versions of <u>. Nevertheless, based on his key words (*rule, tool, fool*) and his statement that his <u> vowel is rounded, one might assume that he contrasted phonemically long /u:/ with short /u/ [u ~ ʊ ~ ʏ].

Likewise, his <o> does not have a long /ɔ:/ equivalent which he would have doubled as <oo> or indicated with a circumflex accent <ô>.⁶ Nevertheless, Grandgent (1899), Angus (1935) and Wise (1948) all assumed that Franklin did have long /u:/ and /ɔ:/ phonemes. The question then is why Franklin would not have indicated long *u* or long *o*. My tentative answer is that this may stem from the influence of New England short *u* and *o* discussed in Chapters 20 through 22. *

6 In Chapter 26, I pointed out that Franklin begins his presentation of his vocalic system with what appears to be back mid <o> /ɔ(:)/ stating that "It is endeavoured to give the alphabet a *more natural order*." By this, I believe he means that the vowel is a true back vowel and that the tongue is positioned in an intermediate position in terms of height. As we have seen above, he also begins his presentation of his consonants with glottal fricative /h/, also situated at the back of the vocal tract. I do not believe this is fortuitous.

Fig. 28.1 Franklin's RMS vocalic system.



*The numbers in superscript represent the order of presentation in his tables (1768/1779)

If we accept that his RMS system includes long *u* and *o* phonemes, the number of vowel phonemes would be increased to twelve. They are presented here in order:

/ɔ:/ - /ɔ/, /ʊ/ - /ʊ:/, /æ/, /ɛ/ - /ɛ:/, /i:/ - /i/, /u:/ - /u/, /ʌ/⁷

Fig. 28.2 Franklin's RMS phonemic inventory.

/i:/ - /i/	/u:ʔ/ - /u/
/ɛ:/ - /ɛ/	/ɔ:ʔ/ - /ɔ/
	* /ʌ/
/æ/	/ʊ:/ ~ /ʊ/

* [ɿ ~ ʏ ~ ə] are Massachusetts variables of London /ʌ/ in this representation

7 [ə] would be an unstressed variant, while Franklin's realization of this /ʌ/ London vowel would have been the more conservative [ɿ ~ ʏ].

The phonetic range of Franklin's RMS **u** /Λ/ was probably [Λ ~ ə ~ ʏ ~ ʊ ~ u] in 17th-century New England and in large parts of England.

3.1.1 Order and Presentation

We saw in the last chapter that, from /q(:)/, Franklin moves downward to low back vowels <**aa**> /ɒ(:)/ [ɒ(:)] ~ ɑ(:)] and then moves forward towards low front vowels <**a**> /æ(:)/. He then heads upward towards mid front vowels <**e(e)**> /ɛ:/ [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] (contrasting with short /ɛ/) and then to high <**ii**> /i:/ (contrasting with short <**i**> /i/ [i ~ ɪ]). From there he moves on to high back <**u**> /u(:)/. He culminates this circular, clockwise demonstration with his <**u**> character, which most linguists who have studied his RMS have interpreted as a centralized vowel in the area of /Λ/, or perhaps /ə/ (Malone, 1925).

Concerning the latter, following Grandgent's description of "New England short o" (Grandgent, 1899), I have argued throughout that I believe Franklin's own realization of *Strut* and *Foot* words (as well as subclasses of *Goat*, *Goose* and *Lot* words) was [ʏ ~ ʊ] and that, taking into account the entire New England area including Connecticut, the phonetic range for these was most likely [ʊ ~ ʏ ~ ʊ ~ Λ ~ ə] and close variants thereof. I was encouraged in this analysis by Wells (1988, 199), by Beal (1999, 135-137) and by Mazarin (2020, 6) who points out that Wilkins' <**u**> in *Strut* and *Foot* words was also [ʏ]. My transcription of Wilkins' "Apostles' Creed" runs parallel to his conclusion (cf. Chapter 13 for my explanations).

Citing Mazarin (2020), who proposes that Hodges, Lodwick and Cooper also had this [ʏ] realization of *Strut* and *Foot* words, I also concluded that the onset of his *Price* diphthongs was [ʏi]. Considering the demographic makeup of Massachusetts, settled by people who came from regions where this pronunciation was common in 17th-century England, I proposed that this [ʏi] diphthong was one of the features of the New England feature pool.

In both cases, the argument is strengthened by studying the nature of the dozens of rhymes of *Strut*, *Foot*, *Goat*, *Goose*, *Lot* words by New England poets (and also English poets, starting with Alexander Pope), which reveals that their rhymes conform. Furthermore, observers going back to Webster (1783, 1789), Ellis (1869), Grandgent (1899), Wright (1905, 17)⁸, Krapp (1925), Orbeck (1927), Whitehall (1935) and, more recently, Avis's work on New England short o (Avis, 1971), Parry's description of [ʏ] in Gwent and Herefordshire, Trudgill's concurring evidence for Norfolk (*home* /hum/, *road* /rud/, *comb* /kum]...) and, finally, identical transcriptions of [ʏ] recorded in a host of *Strut*, *Foot*, *Goat*, *Goose* and *Lot* words by the SED in Norfolk (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 1971), it would be

8 Consider his **u** pronunciation throughout the Midlands, which I have identified as a vowel close to or identical to [ʏ or ʊ].

highly unreasonable, in my view, not to consider this hypothesis of a Boston and Massachusetts [ɹ ~ ʔ]] vowel in aforementioned environments to be a plausible reality (Chapters 20, 21 and 22).

I argue, however, that this blatant Massachusetts feature is not overtly presented in his RMS. By all intents and purposes, it appears to present a modified system for which he distinguishes, with a few exceptions, between <ɔ>, <u> and <ɹ> characters (cf. section 1 above). As I have explained, given that his obvious linguistic model was based on cultivated London English, I did not represent his **ɹ** phonemically by /ɹ/ or /ʔ/ but rather by /ʌ/, which was the pronunciation most current in London at the time, and probably Polly Stevenson's. However, as explained previously, in my phonetic renditions of it, I have given [ɹ ~ ʔ] as Franklin's realization of the examples hence, **kɹm** /kʌm/ "come" and **dɹn** /dʌn/ corresponding to Franklin's Boston [kɹm] and [dɹn].

To conclude this summary of the RMS vocalic system, what I find striking here is the logical order of presentation of his vocalic system, showing that he had a clear understanding of articulatory phonetics that was well ahead of his time. Interestingly, if his **ɹ** character had indeed represented a vowel close to [ɹ], the symmetry with regard to /ɔ/ would be perfect, that is, the passage from [ɔ] > [ɹ] could have marked a near perfect return to the articulatory point of departure.

Finally, this presentation of his vocalic system demonstrates that he had a clear idea of the role of the height of the tongue (high, mid, low) in producing the vowel sounds as well as their position in the vocal tract (back, central, front). Even if he does not systematically indicate the role of the lips (rounding as opposed to unrounding), or vowel length, he was also aware of these concepts. Even if his system does not follow the order that modern linguists have conceived, it seems clear that Franklin designed this scientifically-based system on his own.

3.1.2 Diphthongs

His diphthongs are presented phonemically as follows: /ʌi/ [ɹi ~ əi] for both *Price* and *Choice* words. In Chapter 27, however, we saw that he hesitates between the latter and the /ɔi/ variant for both these key words, which became the accepted pronunciation in London by the end of the 18th century. The SED shows that it is still the dominant pronunciation in Essex and London, but not in Norfolk where [ʌi] is most common. The /ɔi/ variant for *Price* words only appears in the 1768 manuscript version sent to Polly (she uses only <ɹi> spelling). I have also proposed that Polly may have discouraged him from using the /ɔi/ variant, which she may have considered (in the 1760s) as an innovative London pronunciation.

Franklin also gives /ɔu/ for *Mouth* words, however, which I believe may also be the result of London influence. If so, his 1768 /ɔi/ transcription would be in perfect harmony with Franklin's [au ~ aɔ] *Mouth* words. If we accept

MacMahon’s analysis, London *Price* words would have been /ɔi/ and *Choice* words would have been realized as [ɔ:i]; for reasons discussed in Chapter 26, I consider Franklin’s interpretation of this /ɔi/ vs /ɔ:i/ opposition to have been a notch lower, i.e. [ɒ(:)i]. I have explained previously that [ɒ(:)] is another innovative feature that has been introduced in the London area at a late date (Mazarin, 2020). At the time, all the descriptions of the English orthoepists point to a long French <â> realization of *Taught* words, which I interpret to be [ɑ:] or, to English ears, perhaps [ɒ:].

3.1.3 Consonantal System

I argued that his presentation of the consonantal system was equally rational and remarkably well-structured, even if it includes a number of erratic features and aspects which were discussed in detail in Chapter 26.

Below are the two tables representing Franklin’s consonantal system. The first is the same table presented in Chapter 27 (Figure 27.1) which I have reproduced as Figure 28.3 here for the sake of the reader. The first consonant he presents and describes is /h/ and it represents Franklin’s “natural order” of consonants as he conceived it for his RMS and which has been reproduced here for practical reasons. Just as for the vowels, I have attached a number in superscript to each pseudo-phoneme. This corresponds to the order of the presentation and description he provides for each consonant in his Tables 1 and 3 (Franklin, 1779, 468, 470b).

Here I ask the reader to compare this presentation in Figure 28.3 with Figure 28.4, which shows the progression from his system from right to left, marking a clear back to front vision of the articulatory structure of his consonant system. We observe that he begins his presentation on the very right, representing the glottal /h/ and ending with bilabial /m/ to the left, showing how far ahead of his time Franklin’s scheme actually was.

Fig. 28.3 Franklin’s RMS consonantal system.

Franklin’s consonant system							
	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Apico-alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Velar	Glottal
Nasals	/m/ ¹⁹			/n/ ⁶		/ŋ/ ⁵	
Trills				/r/ ⁷			
Stops				/t/ ⁸ , /d/ ⁹		/k/ ³ , /g/ ²	
Liquids	/p/ ¹⁸ , /b/ ¹⁷			/l/ ¹⁰			
Fricatives		/f/ ¹⁵ , /v/ ¹⁶	/θ/ ¹³ , /ð/ ¹⁴	/s/ ¹¹ , /z/ ¹²	/ʃ/ ⁴		/h/ ¹

* The numbers in superscript indicate the order in which they appear in his table.

In the preceding chapter, I described his /ʃ/ as out of place, in that he placed it in fourth place before /ŋ/ in fifth place. In that sense it would have been better if he had indicated /ŋ/⁴ and /ʃ/⁵. This was clearly an error on his part. He nevertheless sensed the palatal nature of /ʃ/ which he must have associated with /ŋ/. However, by placing /ʃ/ after velars, but before apico-alveolars, this demonstrates Franklin’s exemplary understanding of the articulatory tract.

What is remarkable here is that his “back to front” system, representing his “natural order” of consonants (and vowels), is simply an alternate approach to the system used by contemporary linguists (cf. Figure 28.4) where the movement passes in an identical way from the glottal consonant /h/, to the velars, palato-alveolars, alveolars, interdental, labiodentals and bilabials. In short, Franklin’s logical sequencing is precise and follows the same scheme presented in list form in the tables presented in Chapter 26. This is the first time it has been placed in the form of a table. He simply did not possess this technical vocabulary to describe his system in the same manner. There can be no doubt that Franklin had an innate sense of the concepts and, in this respect, when one compares Figure 28.3 with 28.4, one can only be struck by how original his thinking was. In the context of his RMS, I believe this offers us another unique glimpse into Franklin’s fertile mind.

Fig. 28.4 Franklin’s RMS – a contemporary IPA presentation.

	Bilabial	Labio-Dental	Inter-dental	Alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Velar	Glottal
Stops	p, b			t, d		k, g	
Trill/tap							
Affricates					tʃ, dʒ		
Fricatives		f, v	θ, ð		ʃ, ʒ		h
Nasals	m			n		ŋ	
Laterals				l			
Approximants	*w?			ɹ	*j?		

*Only in Franklin’s rapid speech

3.1.4 Affricates, Consonant Clusters and the Case of /ʒ/ vs /ʃ/

Franklin viewed English orthographic <wh> as a cluster consisting of two separate phonemes [h] + [u], i.e. [hu-] and, in rapid speech, [hw-]. This is normally represented in IPA transcription by /ɹ/. Recall that both he and Webster advocated its use for symbolic and historical reasons, that is, it

was an older, “purer” English pronunciation. In Chapter 23, we saw that Noah Webster, like Franklin, was a strong supporter of this [hu- ~ hw-] pronunciation.

There are many people who omit the aspirate in most words which begin with *wh*; as *white*, *whip*, &c. which they pronounce *wite*, *wip*. To such it is necessary only to observe, that in the pure English pronunciation, both in Great Britain and New England, for it is exactly the same in both, *h* is not silent in a single word beginning with *wh*. In this point our standard authors differ; two of them aspirating the whole of these words, and three, marking *h* in most of them as mute. *But the omission of h seems to be a foreign corruption; for in America, it is not known among the unmixed descendants of the English* (my italics). Sheridan has here given the true English pronunciation. In this class of words, *w* is silent in four only, with their derivatives; viz. *who*, *whole*, *whoop*, *whore*. (Webster, 1789, 121)

Ironically, it was rarely heard in Massachusetts or in London. It was more common in the middle colonies and in the South and still is. I cited an informant from Virginia who pronounces [hw] medially in words like “overwhelm” [ɒvəɹhwɛlm]. We have seen that Timothy Dwight states that Massachusettsans rarely ever pronounced <wh> as [hu ~ hw] (cf. Chapter 27). Grandgent says the same (1899, 235). I have concluded that for both Franklin and Webster, their insistence on the correctness of this pronunciation is symbolic and, in both their cases, a hypercorrection. <**Hu**> is systematically represented in his RMS, however, and, ironically, neither representative of Boston or London speech. Having said this, it would have been relatively common in Philadelphia and in Pennsylvania more generally.

Likewise, he also interprets the affricates /tʃ/ or /dʒ/ to be consonant clusters. To repeat, in Chapters 25 and 26, we discussed his inability to distinguish between the voiceless and voiced fricatives /ʃ/ and /ʒ/. That is, he does not appear to have heard this /ʒ/ sound, which he described as a “French” consonant as in the word *jamais* “never.” He seems baffled by its pronunciation, despite the fact that it appears in words such as *treasure*, *measure*, *pleasure* (albeit all of them French loanwords). Very curiously, he analyzes it as an affricate, that is **zʃ**, thus violating his own rule, “one sound for one letter” (for Franklin’s h-like /ʃ/ character cf. Chapter 25).

This explains his transcriptions of **tʃ** /tʃ/, **dʃ** /dʒ/. Nevertheless, we saw that Orbeck (1927) gives a number of Massachusetts examples where “division,” “divisional,” “provision” are all written with “shion” [ʃən], which may explain Franklin’s confusion here.

4. Diachronic and Comparative Views of the Data

The vocalic system Franklin conceived for his RMS was examined in Chapters 26 and 27. As mentioned above, what is perhaps most stunning for a modern linguist is the discovery of how forward-thinking he was for the time. Although we have identified the weaker points of his system, overall, I have highlighted the fact that, from an articulatory phonetic standpoint, the RMS displays a thoroughly logical structure. We saw above that, when interpreted literally, his basic system counts only seven characters but, if we take into account the *possibility* of vocalic length of short and long vowels for **aa**, **u** and **o**, this number is expanded to a total of twelve vowel phonemes.

In the descriptions given in Chapters 15, 17, 20, etc. of Part III, I evoked the possibility that the short, lax vowels of RP/GA were tenser and slightly longer during the 17th and 18th centuries than they are today. I argued that this tense nature of our currently lax vowels (which Lass believes survived until the end of the 17th century) persisted in reality well into the 18th century. I demonstrated that, without any possible doubt, relics of this older system have survived until today in both England and America. Wise (1948, 118), for instance, writes “All modern interpreters of Franklin, from Ellis onward, appear to yield to the belief that Franklin used [u] in both ‘rule’ and ‘book.’ Pending further study, there seems little else to do.” Of course, he has not indicated whether this [u] is long or short.

4.1 Phonological Evolution in England from 1500-1800 and in America from 1600-1800

Figure 28.5 below presents a broad overview of the diachronic progression of the English vocalic system(s) from 16th- and 17th-century England and 17th- and 18th-century colonial America that was discussed throughout Part III. This figure is based on Figure 15.6, presented in Chapter 15. It introduces Mazarin's global scheme which outlines his Type-A, -B and -C stages of development (Mazarin, 2020). I have not included Type D because it is less relevant for our purposes. I have done my best to respect Mazarin's interpretations as far as they go but, on occasion, I have expanded on his system (hopefully without violating his basic analysis). As stated in Chapter 15, any errors of interpretation are mine alone.

Having said that, I have taken the liberty to introduce key words where I have judged them to be pertinent to the understanding of the overall scheme. NB: Recall that the key words are listed in accordance with the ME system.

Fig. 28.5 The diachronic development of the English vocalic system (1500-1800).

ME vowels	Key word	Type A 1500-1600	Type B 1550-1675	Type C 1650-1750	The New England records 1620-1700	BF's rhymes 1719-1758
Front vowels						
ME i:	PRICE	ii ⁹ ~ ëi	ei	ei ~ əi	ei ~ əi ~ ʁi	əi ~ ʁi
ME /i/	KIT	i/i	i/i	i/i	i ~ i ~ i· (i·i / i:)?	i (i ~ i·)
ME /e:/	FLEECE	e: ~ i:	i:	i:	(e: ~ e:) ~ i:	i: ~ e: ~ e: (ei?)
ME /ɛ:/	MEAT	ɛ:	^{B1} e: ~ ^{B2} i:	^{C1} e: ~ ^{C2} i:	ɛ: ~ e: ~ e: ~ i:	ɛ: ~ e: (~ i:)
ME /ɛ/	DRESS	ɛ	e ~ e	e ~ e	ɛ ~ e ~ e (> i)	ɛ ~ i (*pin-pen)
ME /a:/	FACE	æ:	æ: ^{B1} ~ ɛ: ^{B2}	ɛ: ^{C1}	ɛ: ([ei]?) see Wait below	ɛ: ~ e:
ME /a/	TRAP	a	æ	æ ~ æ: ¹⁰	æ(:) ~ ɛ(:)	æ ~ ɛ
ME /a/	BATH	a ~ æ	æ	æ:	a: ~ æ ~ ɛ:	(a:?) ~ æ: ~ ɛ:
ME /a/	PALM ¹¹	æ	æ ~ (a:)	æ: ~ a: ~ a:	æ(:) ~ a:	æ(:)lm
Back vowels						
ME /u:/	MOUTH ¹²	u: ~ ɔu	ɔu ~ (ɔ:u)	ɔu ~ əu	ɔu ~ ʁu ~ ɒu au (~ æu ~ ɛu?)	ʁu ~ əu ɒu RMS
ME /u/	GOOSE ¹³	ɔ: ~ u:	u:	u:	u: u ~ ʁ	u(:) u > ʁ

- 9 Mazarin's source of [ii] is based on Wilhelm Viëtor's interpretation, see his (Mazarin, 2020, 18, footnote 20). Based on my own observations of southwestern Breton dialectal evolution, I also recorded the same treatment of [i:] which has developed into a diphthong: [ii ~ ei]. I concluded long ago, based on this Breton-language evidence, that English speakers of the late 15th century probably could not hear the difference between [ii] and [i:]. The tipping point had to have come when [ii ~ ei] dropped to [ei ~ ei] (cf. Chapter 16). This is when the new shift truly became discernible for most speakers of the time.
- 10 Source of [æ:]: "During the full flowering of type C in the 1680s, Cooper provides the only picture of extensive TRAP /æ/ and LOT /a/ lengthening until the mid-1700s" (Mazarin, 2020, 10).
- 11 Source of [a:] in *Palm* words: "Gil's advanced type uses [a:] in two environments: before historical /l/, as in *call, balm, salt, walk, half*; and before nasal clusters, where [a:] varies with TRAP and [au]" (Mazarin, 2020, 3).
- 12 Source of /ɒu ~ əu/: clearly, many variants were circulating. Sir Isaac Newton (circa 1661), from Lincolnshire, equated this pronunciation with French aou [au] suggesting to me that it actually may have preceded the development of [əu ~ ɒu]. This [au] pronunciation probably gave 18th and 19th century [æu ~ ɛu] in the English Midlands and in the North and South of the United States (Grandgent, 1899). Very likely, they already were heard in the 17th- and 18th-century vernaculars but were possibly limited geographically in use.
- 13 Mazarin (2020, 10) describes /o:/ as high-mid (my [ɔ:]) for Types B, C and D. As I have argued previously, I also believe that mid [ɔ:] was an allophone of this high-mid /o:/ [ɔ:] in certain varieties throughout this entire period. I have argued the same for high mid /e:/, that is, that it almost certainly had a mid [e:] bridge vowel as an allophone which extended to [ɛ:]. The

ME vowels	Key word	Type A 1500-1600	Type B 1550-1675	Type C 1650-1750	The New England records 1620-1700	BF's rhymes 1719-1758
ME /ɔ:/	STRUT ¹⁴	u	ʏ ^{B1} ~ ə ^{B2}	ʏ ~ ʌ	ʏ ~ u	ʏ
ME /ɔ:/	FOOT	u(:)	u ^{B1} ~ u ~ ʏ	ʏ ~ u	ʏ ~ u	ʏ
ME /ɔ:/	GOAT	ɔ:	ɔ:	ɔ:	ɔ(:) (~ ʏ)	ɔ(:) (~ ʏ)
ME /ɔ/	LOT ¹⁵	ɔ (a: ~ a)	ɑ	ɑ ~ a: ¹⁶	a: ~ ɔ: ɔ(:) ~ u ~ ʏ	ɔ ~ ɑ ɔ(:) ~ u ~ ʏ
ME /ɔx/ ME /ax/	TAUGHT ¹⁷	au ¹⁸	ɑ:	ɑ:	ɑ: ~ ɔ:	ɑ: ~ ɔ:
Vowels + /r/						
ME /ir/	GIRL	ɪɪ ~ ɛɪ	ɛɪ	ɛɪ ~ æɪ	ɛɪ ~ æɪ ~ əɪ	ɔɪ
ME /er/	NEAR ¹⁹	ɛ:ɪ	ɛ:ɪ	ɛ:ɪ	æ:ɪ ~ ɛ:ɪ ~ i:ɪ	æ:ɪ ~ ɛ:ɪ ~ i:ɪ
ME / ari/	SQUARE	æ:ɪ	æ:ɪ	æ:ɪ ~ ɛ:ɪ	æ:ɪ ~ ɛ:ɪ	æ:ɪ ~ ɛ:ɪ
ME /ar/	START	ɑɪ	æɪ ~ æ:ɪ ²⁰	æ:ɪ	æ(:)ɪ ~ a(:)ɪ	æ(:)ɪ

fluctuation between these was constant.

- 14 In Chapter 22, I identified subclasses of *Goose*, *Strut*, *Foot*, *Goat* and *Lot* words, all being realized as being in the vicinity of [ʏ ~ ʏ] with possible phonetic extensions depending on the key word (e.g. [u ~ ʌ] for *Foot* words) and according to the register or geographic region.
- 15 Source of [ʏ ~ ʏ] in *Lot* words: the discussion concerning these raised realizations of *Lot* words remains the most challenging and perplexing in this entire study. Yet the high number of rhymes involving this raised realization appears undeniable. Evidence from the Massachusetts town records support this conclusion.
- 16 Source of GA [ɑ:] (rather than RP [ɒ]): Mazarin (2020, 10) writes “Cultivated speakers scorned both LOT and TRAP lengthening into the mid-1600s.” As I have pointed out in Chapter 20, TRAP lengthening is common in American English today and LOT lengthening is fully recognized as part of the GA phonemic system.
- 17 Source of [ɑ:]: Mazarin (2020, 13) writes: “Thomas Sheridan (1789 pp. xv, xxiii) records the same qualities as late as 1789. He confirms that TAUGHT–NORTH is unrounded /ɑ:/ when he says it is pronounced with the mouth opened “wide.” His START–BATH vowel /æ:/ is “long, though it retains the same sound” as TRAP /æ/. This is precisely the description Grandgent gives of it in 1899 for his key word “caught” for which he says the tongue is lowered “as far as it will go.” This can only be /ɑ:/.
- 18 We saw in Chapter 20 that words such as *taught*, *thought* were originally diphthongized during the Type A stage. A trace of this may have survived in contemporary southern US English where these words are often realized as [ɒ] and in Lancashire as [ɛɪ].
- 19 The passage from [ɛ:ɪ] > [i:ɪ] implies the passage through a series of bridge vowels, namely, [ɛ:ɪ] and [ɛ:ɪ] > [i:ɪ]. In 17th-century North America, it descended even further to [ɛ:ɪ] and [æ:ɪ].
- 20 Source of [æ:ɪ]: “When ME /arC/ first lengthened from [æɪC] to [æ:ɪC], words like start crowded into phonetic territory that was already claimed in type B by words like stared /stæ:rd/” (Mazarin, 2020, 7); “Bellot’s dialogues also give us our earliest glimpses of TRAP lengthening in a handful of transcriptions like for *yard* [jæ:ɪd]” (Mazarin, *ibid.*). I argued in the introductory discussion to Chapter 17 that /æ:/, normally classified as lax in GA, is in reality considerably longer than in RP. Note that popular Massachusetts “start” is pronounced with an intermediate, r-less [sta:t] with compensatory lengthening.

ME vowels	Key word	Type A 1500-1600	Type B 1550-1675	Type C 1650-1750	The New England records 1620-1700	BF's rhymes 1719-1758
ME /ɔr/	NORTH	ɔɪ	ɒɪ ~ ɑɪ	ɑɪ ~ ɑ:ɪ	ɔɪ ~ ɒɪ	ɔɪ ~ ɒɪ
ME /ɔɪ/	FORCE	ɔ:ɪ	ɔ:ɪ	ɔ:ɪ	ɒ(:)ɪ ~ ɔ(:)ɪ	ɒɪ
ME /uɪ/	NURSE	uɪ	ʏɪ	ʏɪ	ɛɪ ~ ɒɪ ~ əɪ	ɒɪ
Diphthongs						
ME /ai/	WAIT	æi ~ ɛi	^{B2} æi ²¹ ~ ɛi ~ ɛ:	ɛi ²² ~ ɛ:	ɛi ~ ɛ: ~ ɛ:	ɛi ~ ɛ: ~ ɛ:
ME /ɔi/	CHOICE	ɔi	ɔi ~ ʌi	ɔi ~ ʌi	ui ~ ʌi ~ ɔi	ʏi ~ əi
Final -y and -er						
ME /i/	HAPPY	i ~ ɛi	i ~ ɛi	i ~ i	i ~ əi ²³	i ~ ɛi
ME /ər/	LETTER	əɪ	əɪ	əɪ	əɪ	əɪ

*Mazarin does not include the *Nurse* or *Choice* tokens in his article. To complete some of the data for New England, I have also added *Girl* and *Near* key words.

To conclude this summary, in Figure 28.5, the orthoepists' descriptions of the linguistic situation in 17th- and 18th-century England, combined with the information obtained from the New England and New York town records and Barlow, Dwight and Franklin's rhyme schemes present, overall, and despite the range of variables, a relatively homogenous view of the state of the language in both England and New England. Globally, there are relatively few areas where the development of the English and American data are incompatible.

Part of the chaotic appearance of this chart is due to my choice of presenting a simplified phonetic scheme rather than a phonemic interpretation which would have masked a considerable amount of evidence that was brought to light in Parts III and IV. Despite the potential confusion and possible contradictions, I feel that this provides the reader with a more exact vision of the linguistic reality of 17th- and 18th-century English in colonial America.

21 I have argued that [æi] was the most common realization of *Wait* vowels during much of the 17th century. The diphthong [ɛi] almost certainly co-existed in colonial American English alongside monophthongized Franklin's RMS /ɛ:/ in New England. By analogy, it is possible that *Face* vowels shifted to diphthongal /ei/ for this reason.

22 I have introduced this [ɛi] based on Mazarin's interpretation of the New England distinction between *Wait* [ɛi] and *Price* [əi] (Mazarin, 2020, 9). It stands to sense, however, that /ei/ was a reflex of /æi/. If [ɛ:] arose so early one can imagine [ɛi] must also been current throughout the A, B, C and D stages until the present time, although not necessarily in all dialects. Mazarin cites Bellot (1586) as being the first to note that the *Wait* vowel was already monophthongal [ɛ:] in popular London pronunciation.

23 This [əi] pronunciation appears to have been recessive in late 18th-century polite English but Franklin and presumably his fellow New Englanders appear to have preserved this older feature. See above the discussion about the pronunciation of [ləi] and [əi] in his RMS for *perfectly* and *hurry* and for this same pronunciation and its 16th-century sources in Chapter 16.

4.2 Franklin’s Idiolect and the New England Phonetic Ranges of Key Words

Figure 28.6 below focuses on the phonetic ranges identified for each of Wells’ lexical sets and compares the data with each of Franklin’s RMS characters. Recall too that sections 1.1.1 to 1.1.22 of Chapter 24 were broken down into innovative and conservative categories which often correspond to the paritary and disparitary registers. It seems quite clear that many of the more innovative characteristics (such as lowering of /æ/ > /a:/ > /ɑ:/ before post-vocalic /-r/, for example), or the centralization of <ir>, <er>, <ur>, as well as r-loss and so on, were adopted more quickly in Proto-RP in London than in North America and are now fully representative of contemporary RP (additional innovations were introduced by Daniel Jones into the system during the early 20th century). Mazarin (2020) points out the example of /ɔ:/ which, contrary to what has generally been thought by historical linguists, has only recently entered the RP phonemic inventory, replacing older English /ɑ: ~ ɒ:/ in *Taught* words.

Just as with the preceding figure, the data is presented in the form of lexical sets and outlines some of the major features (but certainly not all) that characterize the colonial American English vocalic system.

One of the fundamental objectives of this book was to demonstrate that Franklin’s RMS was an attempt to present a model that reflected the cultivated London accent of the late 17th century. As I have repeated throughout this book, he intended his RMS to represent what he believed to be an ideal system of pronunciation for all the people in the British Empire, not only for North Americans. Again, when viewed collectively, the phonetic ranges provided in this figure gives an idea of what his idealized system of pronunciation resembled. It also signals those areas where his RMS system veers away from his own Massachusetts/New England English system.

Fig. 28.6 A comparative look at the New England vocalic system and Franklin’s RMS.

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England town records Phonetic range	Franklin and New England poets Phonetic range	Franklin’s RMS
ME Front vowels				
ME /i:/	PRICE	ɛi ~ æi ~ ai əi ~ ʌi ~ ɾi	əi ~ ɾi *ʌi (Barlow)	/ʌi/ 1779 BF əi ~ ɾi
ME /i/	KIT	i ~ ɪ ~ i·	i ~ ɪ lowering ɪ > ɛ	/i/ BF i ~ ɪ
ME /e:/	FLEECE	ɛ: ~ ɛ: ~ i: / ɛi?	ɛ: ~ ɛ: ~ i: / ɛi?	/i:/

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England town records Phonetic range	Franklin and New England poets Phonetic range	Franklin's RMS
ME /ɛ:/	MEAT	ɛ: ~ ɛ̃: ~ ɛ̃: ~ i:	ɛ: ~ ɛ̃: ~ ɛ̃: ~ i:	/i:/
ME /ɛ/	DRESS	ɛ ~ (ɛ̃ ~ ɛ̃) ~ i	ɛ ~ i (pin-pen)	/ɛ/ BF ɛ > i
ME /a:/	FACE	ɛ: ~ ɛ̃:	ɛ:	/ɛ:/
ME /a/	TRAP	æ(:)	æ(:)	/æ(:)/
ME /a/	BATH	æ: æ: > ɛ: ~ ɛ̃	æ: æ: > ɛ: ~ ɛ̃	/æ(:)/ + /ɛ(:)/
ME /a/	PALM	a: ~ æ:	a:? ~ æ:	/æ(:)/
ME Back vowels				
ME /u:/	MOUTH	ɔu ~ əu ~ ɣu au ~ æu? ~ ɛu?	əu ~ ɣu ²⁴	/ɔu/
ME /ɔ:/	GOOSE	u: ~ u ~ ʊ ~ ɣ	u(:) subclass: ʊ ~ ɣ	/u(:)/
ME /ʊ/	STRUT	ʊ ~ ɣ	ɣ ~ ʊ ɣ ~ ʊ > *ʌ	/ʌ/ BF [ʊ ~ ɣ
ME /ɔ:/	FOOT	u ~ ʊ ~ ɣ	u ~ ʊ ~ ɣ	/u/
ME /ɔ:/	GOAT	ɔ̃: ~ ɔ̃ ~ ɣ̃	ɔ̃: ~ ɔ̃ ~ ɣ̃	/ɔ̃(:)/
ME /ɔ/	LOT	ɒ ~ ʌ ~ ɣ	ɒ ~ ɣ	/ɒ: ~ ʌ:/
ME /ɔ(:)/	THOUGHT	ʌ: ~ ɒ:	ʌ: ~ ɒ:	/ɒ: ~ ʌ:/
Vowels + /r/				
ME /ir/	GIRL	ɛɪ ~ æɪ ~ əɪ	ɛɪ ~ æɪ ~ əɪ ~ ɒɪ	/ʌɪ/ BF ɣɪ ~ əɪ
ME /ɛr/	NEAR	ɛ̃:ɪ~(ɛ̃ɪ~ɛ̃:ɪ)~æ̃:ɪ ɛ̃:ɪ~(ɛ̃:ɪ~ɛ̃:ɪ)~ĩ:ɪ	æ̃:ɪ~ɛ̃:ɪ~ɛ̃:ɪ~ĩ:ɪ	/ĩ:ɪ/
ME /a:r/	SQUARE	æ̃:ɪ~ɛ̃:ɪ æ̃:ɪ~ɛ̃:ɪ > ɛ̃:ɪ > ĩ:ɪ	æ̃:ɪ ~ ɛ̃:ɪ	/ɛ̃:ɪ/
ME /ar/	START	æ̃:ɪ ~ ã:ɪ ~ ʌ̃:ɪ	æ̃:ɪ ~ ã:ɪ?	/æ̃:ɪ/
ME /ɔr/	NORTH	ɒɪ	ɒɪ	/ɒɪ/ ʌɪ ~ ɒɪ
ME /ʊr/	NURSE	ɛɪs ²⁵ ~ ɒɪs ~ əɪs	ɒɪs	/əɪs/

24 Cf. Recall that the Massachusetts town record spellings of *conncil* for “council” (Dedham, 1661), *acount* for “account” (Watertown, 1670), *drond* for “drowned” (Plymouth, 1702), *sothe* for “south” (Plymouth, 1701) (Orbeck, 1927, 52).

25 Recall *tern* [tɛɪn] for “turn” (1694), *teret* [tɛɪɛt ~ tɛɪɪt] for “turret” (1708), *retern* [ɹĩtɛɪn ~ ɹɛtɛɪn] (1708), *Tirke* [tɪɪkɛ] for 1710, all in the Plymouth records.

ME source	Key word	17th-century New England town records Phonetic range	Franklin and New England poets Phonetic range	Franklin's RMS
ME diphthongs				
ME /ai/	WAIT	æi ~ ei ~ ε:	ε: æi ~ ei	/ε:/
ME /ɔi/	CHOICE	ui ~ əi ei? ~ æi? ~ ai?	ai ~ əi ~ ɾi	/Δi/ BF əi ~ ɾi
Final -y and -er				
ME /i/	HAPPY	i ~ ei ~ əi	i ~ əi	/i/
ME /ər/	LETTER	əɪ ~ ɐɪ	əɪ	/əɪ/

All in all, however, his RMS model is relatively conservative in comparison with the phonological systems described by Kenrick (1773), Nares (1784) and Walker (1791) as presented in Figure 28.7. This can be partly put down to his age and partly to his provincial origins (i.e. colonial lag).

4.3 A Comparative Look at Franklin's RMS and Kenrick, Nares and Walker's Schemes

Figure 28.7 below evaluates Franklin's RMS transcriptions, some of which appear to betray earlier provincial conservatisms or "Americanisms" (see the outline in section 1 above), with the London-based schemes advocated by Kenrick (1773), Nares (1784) and Walker (1791). Keeping in mind the phonetic ranges encompassing the paritary and disparitary koines of 17th- and 18th-century New England and Franklin's personal phonetic inventory and his RMS phonemic system presented above in Figure 28.6, the data presented below strongly supports the argument that Franklin's RMS model was indeed based on educated London English, not his own idiolect. Nevertheless, in a number of cases, we see that his tendency to centralize vowels in words like *girl* are contrary to New England usage where it was still pronounced [gɛɪl ~ gæɪl] (and which gave us vernacular American "gal" [gæ:l] with r-loss). This may be an attempt on his part to reproduce what was manifestly a growing tendency in London English during the 1760s but which was still considered vulgar by most English and American orthoepists. Walker (1791), for instance, records *girl* as [gɛɪl], *learn* as [lɛɪn], *merchant* as ['mɛɪtʃənt], *birth* as [bɛɪθ], *mirth* as [mɛɪθ] (but *first* as *furst* [fʌɪst]!). *Earth* and *earnest* were both [ɛɪθ] and ['ɛɪnɛst] respectively (just as by Lowell in Massachusetts nearly sixty years later which he spells "earth" *airth*).

Nares (1784, 12) describes *clerk*, *yellow* and *heart*, *hearth* as all being pronounced [ɛ]. We have seen from Franklin's rhymes that he would have pronounced these last two words [æɪ], (but also possibly [ɛ:] if he chose to code-switch). Recall that in Chapter 18 we recorded Hall (1942, 20), Burton (2010, 54), Orton and Deith (1970, 395), Dobson (1968, 566), Grandgent (1899, 238) as giving [æ] for "yellow" and this could very well have been Franklin's natural pronunciation of *yellow*.

If we return to the example of "clerk" and trace its development historically, we can better understand the GA and RP pronunciations of the word today:

1. 1) [klɛɪk] > 2) [klæɪk] > 3) [klaɪk] > 4) [klɒɪk ~ klɑɪk] > 5) [kləɪk].

Stage 1 was the polite realization during the 17th and 18th century and early 19th century. Stage 2 represents Franklin's natural Boston pronunciation (although many of his fellow Bostonians would already have had a slightly lower [klaɪk] pronunciation as in Stage 3). Stage 4, with r-loss [klɑ:k], is the current RP model (and may also have been common among vulgar speakers in 17th and 18th-century Boston), while Stage 5 is the current GA pronunciation. It too was considered vulgar in colonial times. We saw a similar treatment of "Girl" in the preceding paragraph.

Franklin, as we saw in the first section of this chapter, records such words as *learn* and *learning* as [ləɪn] and [ləɪniŋ] respectively, but he lapses back into his native pronunciation of "unlearned" which he spells *unlarn'd* [ʊn'lærnd], a pronunciation Londoners considered "vulgar." According to Duponceau (1818), [æɪ] was the most common realization of <ir>, <er> words in America. To conclude this series of remarks, Walker centralizes words such as *worse* [wɔɪs] and *worth* [wɔɪθ], whereas, based on Franklin's rhymes, I have concluded that they were realized by him in his poetry as [wɒɪs] and [wɒɪθ]. The same is true of his pronunciation of *purse*, for instance, which he rhymes with *horse* [hɒɪs].

Aside from a few transcription errors where he slips back into his Massachusetts English, such as his spelling of *unlarn'd*, could Franklin's systematic centralization of vowels before /r/ be due to Polly Stevenson's influence? It is entirely possible and, if so, as I have indicated previously that this could be a sign that her accent might reflect her lower-middle-class origins. If such is the case, his respect and affection for her won out over conventional London usage. This of course is purely speculative on my part.

Fig. 28.7 Franklin's RMS and a late 18th-century London model.

Key word	Franklin's RMS Vowel characters	Phonemic Values	Kenrick (1773)	Nares (1784)	Walker (1791)
Front vowels					
PRICE	<i>ʏi</i> (1768 & 1779) <i>ɑi</i> (1768) ²⁶	/ʌi/ [ʏi ~ əi] /ɔi/ London	/ɛi/ [ɛi~æi~ai]	/ʌi/	/ʌi/
KIT	<i>i</i>	/ɪ/ [ɪ ~ i]	/ɪ/	/ɪ/	/ɪ/
FLEECE	<i>ii</i>	/i:/	/i:/	/i:/	/i:/
MEAT	<i>ii</i>	/i:/	/i:/	/i:/	/i:/
DRESS	<i>e</i>	/ɛ/ [ɛ ~ ɪ]	/ɛ/	/ɛ/	/ɛ/
FACE	<i>ee ~ ê</i>	/ɛ:/ [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] [ɛi?]	/ɛ:/	/ɛ:/	/ɛ:/
TRAP	<i>a</i>	/æ(:)/	/æ/	/æ/	/æ/ ²⁷
BATH	<i>a</i>	/æ(:)/ [æ: ~ ɛ:]	/a:/	/a:/	/a:/
PALM	<i>a</i>	/æ(:)l/	/a:/	/a:/	/a:/
Back vowels					
MOUTH	<i>ɑu / ɑo</i>	/ɔu/	/ɔu/ [ɔu ~ ɔu?]	/ɔu/ [ɔu ~ ɔu?]	/ɔu/
GOOSE	<i>u</i>	/u(:)/	/u:/	/u:/	/u:/
STRUT	<i>ʏ</i>	/ʌ/ [ʌ ~ ə ~ ʏ]	/ʌ/	/ʌ/	/ʌ/
FOOT	<i>u</i>	/u/ [u ~ ʊ]	/ʊ/	/ʊ/	/ʊ/
GOAT	<i>o</i>	/ɔ(:)/	/ɔ:/	/ɔ:/	/ɔ:/
LOT	<i>ɑɑ</i>	/ɒ(:)/ [ɒ: ~ ɑ:]	/ɒ/	/ɒ/	/ɒ/ ²⁸
TAUGHT	<i>ɑɑ</i>	/ɒ:/ [ɒ: ~ ɑ:]	/ɒ:/ [ɒ: ~ ɑ:]	/ɑ:/	/ɑ:/ ²⁹
Vowels + /r/					
GIRL	<i>ʏr</i>	/ʌɪ/ [ɛɪ ~ æɪ]	/ɛr/	/ɛɪ/	/ɛɪ/
NEAR	<i>iir</i>	/i:ɪ/	/i:r/	/iɪ/	/iɪ/
SQUARE	<i>eer / êr</i>	/ɛ:ɪ/	/ɛ:r/	/ɛ:ɪ/	/ɛ:ɪ/
START	<i>ar</i>	/æɪ/	/æɪr/	/æɪ/	/a(:)ɪ/ ³⁰
NORTH	<i>ɑar</i>	/ɒ(:)ɪ/ [ɑ:ɪ ~ ɒ:ɪ]	/ɒɪ/ [ɑ:ɪ ~ ɒ:ɪ]	/ɒɪ/ [ɑ:ɪ ~ ɒ:ɪ]	/ɒɪ/ [ɑ:ɪ ~ ɒ:ɪ] ³¹
NURSE	<i>ʏr</i>	/ʌɪ/ [əɪ]	/ʌɪ/	/ʌɪ/	/ʌɪ/

26 In 1768, could he have included this variant after hearing this in the local London vernacular?

27 Walker's short *n*⁴ /æ/.

28 Walker's short *o*⁴ /ɒ/.

29 Walker's long *a*³ /ɑ:/

30 Walker's long *a*² /a:/.

31 Walker's long *o*³ = *a*³ /ɒ:/ and shares the same quality as short *o*⁴.

Key word	Franklin's RMS Vowel characters	Phonemic Values	Kenrick (1773)	Nares (1784)	Walker (1791)
Diphthongs					
WAIT	<i>ee</i> / <i>ê</i>	/ɛ:/	/ɛ:/	/ɛ:/	/ɛ:/
CHOICE	<i>*aai?</i> / <i>*ui?</i>	/Δi/ ~ /ɔi/	/ɔi/ [ɔi ~ ai?]	/ɔi/ [ɔi ~ ai?]	/ɔi/
Final -y and -er					
HAPPY	<i>i</i> / <i>*ui</i> (exceptions)	/i/	/i/	/i/	/i/
LETTER	<i>ur</i>	/əɪ/	/əɪ/	/əɪ/	/əɪ/

*I have stated previously that Franklin's [ɔi] pronunciation for *Choice* words appears to be an attempt on his part to imitate London pronunciation current in London [ɔ(:)i] (MacMahon's [ɔ:ɪ], 1998). His *Mouth* vowels /ɔu/ may be a similar attempt, rather than more symmetrical (hypothetical) *ui* /Δu/. Relic areas from Newfoundland to the Out Banks match *Price* /əi/ with *Mouth* /əu/, not /əi/ and /ɔu/.

NB: Walker (1791, 72) specifies that his *o*³ in *nor*, *for*, *or* is pronounced like his *a*³, in *fall* and *wall*. This also looks very much like it is pronounced like Franklin's [ɔ:ɪ].

Remarks about Figure 28.7:

- With regard to the [ɹi] of *Price* words: Mazarin (2020, 17) writes that in Type C dialects PRICE had already developed a retracted onset (e.g. Cooper's “/ɹi/”) and that it therefore could not be confused with [ɛi] in pairs like *thy* [ðɹi] and *they* [ðɛi]. In Chapter 16, I suggested that this [əi ~ ɹi] realization was Franklin's original pronunciation of this diphthong. Nevertheless, we have also seen that the pathway from ME /i:/ > /ɹi/ would have entailed a phonetic marathon involving lowering to [ai] and centralization via [əi] to [Δi] and raising to [ɹi]! We must also take into consideration that [əi ~ Δi] may not have been the pronunciation of his father and uncle who were from Northamptonshire. In his RMS, he appears to have tried his best to follow polite English usage, hence my decision to represent his *ui* phonemically as /Δi/ while I represent his examples [əi ~ ɹi].
- Kenrick (1773, vi, p. 24) writes that the “I and Y appear to be a commixture of the long e (i.e. of his “mate” token) and short i (i.e. of “hit”). The long <e> of “mate” is thus arguably [ɛ: ~ ɛ̣: ~ ɛ̣:] and short <i> of “hit” is thus [ɪ], hence [ɛ̣:i ~ ɛ̣:ɪ]. If so, this corresponds well to the dominant pronunciation of this category of diphthong during the 17th century! Such a conservative variable in late 18th-century England is a bit surprising (Kenrick was from Hertfordshire) and it may reflect his rural origins. However, in the scheme of things, it is not entirely unexpected. On page 41, however, he adds another possible pronunciation which he describes as being realized as in “*ahi*” [sic] for French *aïe* “ouch,” that

- is, [ai]. However, he literally says that it “*comes near*” (my italics) to [ai] which may mean [æi] (as in rural 19th-century New England). For these reasons, I cannot accept MacMahon's interpretation of Kenrick's *Price* diphthong as representing /Δi/ (MacMahon, 1998, 403-404).
- Nares (1784, 4) compares the *palm* vowel to French <â>: “It is the sound proper to that vowel in Italian, and *frequently given to it in French* (my italics), as in the termination *-age*, and in many other instances.” The key words he gives are *alms*, *balm*, *calm*, *palm*, *qualm* (ibid., 4-5). Nevertheless, by the qualification “frequently given to it in French” he could also mean [a:], which is the most common realization of it in contemporary standard French. In this 18th-century context, [a:] appears more likely.
 - MacMahon (1998, 403-404) transcribes the *Mouth* diphthong as [ɔu]. Unless my interpretation of Walker's pronunciation of *Taught* vowels is mistaken, I would reinterpret the onset of this London diphthong as [au ~ ɔu] for the reasons presented in Chapter 27. If so, this conforms well with Franklin's RMS transcription.
 - Based on evidence accumulated in Chapters 16, 21 and 22, as well as Mazarin (2020), Wells (1988), Jones (1991) and Beal's (1999) analyses, supported by data provided for Norfolk by Trudgill (2016) and the SED (Upton & Tilling, 1970, 1971), and Avis (1971) for New England, as well as the 18th-century New England rhyme schemes and data supported by the 17th-century orthoepists (Wilkins and Cooper), it seems quite obvious that the [ʌ ~ ɤ] was in competition with the more innovative [Λ ~ ə] in the early 18th century, according to Grandgent, and throughout a good part of the 19th century and into the 20th century, when Avis recorded a vowel which he describes as /ə/ and its diphthongized variant /əə/ (cf. Burton, 2010 for a similar description with [Λ] and [Λə] in Dorset dialect). Only tentative traces of this are to be found in his RMS, however (cf. section 1 above and Chapter 26). The main reason that Franklin's native speech may have influenced his RMS here is that both his u and o vowels are short without long equivalents.
 - Mazarin (2020, 13) considers, as I do, that Nares' description of *Taught* vowels reflects an [a:] realization. MacMahon interprets Kenrick's *Law* and *Taught* words to have the value of /ɔ:/ . For the reasons expressed previously, I believe this [ɔ:] quality to have been unlikely at this time, particularly since Nares, Grandgent, Walker and other orthoepists repeatedly compare this vowel to French <â> [a:] in *âge*, *âme* or *pâte*, etc. It therefore cannot possibly be the same as rounded RP /ɔ:/ which, furthermore, does not exist in French in this environment, nor does

it have this rounded English value in French. For this reason, I have allowed for the possibility of a slightly higher [ɒ:], even though the reference is to French [ɑ:]. This is based on my belief that, to 18th-century English and American ears, the distinction between French [ɑ:] (or even French [a]) and English [ɒ:] was difficult for them to make. Proof of this, even if his transcription may have been intended to be humorous, is Sir William Jones' (1786) transcription of Malherbe's poem *La mort a des rigueurs à nulle autre pareille* as /Law more aw day reegyewrs aw nool otruh parelyuh/ which reveals the confusion between French [a] and [ɑ(:)] and [ɒ:], which must have been quite general. It was certainly not [ɔ:] here. Further evidence for the conclusions presented in the preceding paragraph come from Walker (1791, 72), who writes that *fall, awe, or, thought, taught* all have the same vowel (i.e. n° 6) and he states that *ball* and *bawl* are identical in quality (ibid., 26). Interestingly, Gil actually spelt "ball" *bâl* as well during the 17th century. We have also pointed out that Wallis and Wilkins considered *folly* ~ *fall* to be distinguished only in term of length, like Franklin, the first [ɒ] being short, the second [ɒ:] being long.

- Walker also writes that the first element of "boy" and "toy" are pronounced exactly as French â: *bâi* and *tâi*, hence literally [bai] and [tai]: "The diphthong oi or oy is composed of the French â and i; thus *toy* and *boy* would be exactly expressed to a Frenchman by writing them *tâi* and *bâi*" (Walker, 1791, xv). Here again the reference is to French [ɑ:]. We saw that Franklin's transcription of "destroy" *destrœuɟi* was a confused attempt to transcribe two separate diphthongs, London [ɔi] and New England [ɹi ~ əi]. Strictly speaking, Walker means [ai] but, again, it could be a misinterpretation of lower English [ɔi]. Again, I don't see how either of these could be fully rounded English [ɔ:] or [ɔi] for the reasons expressed above and in the introductory discussion of mid-to-low back vowels in Chapter 21. In my view, /ɔ/ could only be possible if it had the quality of the partially unrounded French [ɔ] of *donne*, in which case it would not be too distant from [ʌi]. I do not think this is what Walker or any of the other English orthoepists intended.
- A hundred years later, Grandgent (1899) stated that the vowel "caught" was realized with the tongue lowered as "far it could go," corresponding to the current, and obviously past, realization of American [ɑ:]. Grandgent knew French, however, and this is probably an accurate representation. Nevertheless, as I have explained previously (cf. Chapter 21), I have analyzed /ɒ:/ as the most likely phoneme with [ɒ:] and [ɑ:] vacillating as phonemes among conservative New Englanders

and as allophones for innovative speakers. This [ɒ] quality is also the sound given to it historically by Dobson.

- As noted in Chapter 21, Mazarin (2020, 14) argues, convincingly in my view, that [ɑ:] is the oldest realization of *Taught* and *Ball* words and that [ɔ:] did not enter the RP phoneme inventory until the 1917 edition of Jones' *Everyman's English Pronouncing Dictionary*. Support for this goes back to Wallis and Wilkins who, like Franklin, write that *folly*, *John* and *fall*, *ball*, *awl* share the same vowel quality and differ only in quantity. To repeat, this must be quite an old feature indeed because Gil writes "ball" in his alphabet as *bâl* which, if taken literally, can only be [ba:l]. For a discussion about a subset of *Lot* words with raised [ɾ ~ ʔ] pronunciations, cf. Chapter 22. Nonetheless, I have allowed for the possibility of English and American confusion (Grandgent, 1899) of the French /ɑ:/ with English /ɒ:/.
- Note too that MacMahon (1998, 414) points out that Kenrick shows no "contrast" between /ɔi/ and /ɔi/. Here it seems that he is in error because Kenrick (1773, 24) describes *joy*, *toy* *boy* as being "long and broad" while *high*, *die*, *dry*, *fie* are "long and slender." Although it not easy to make sense of Kenrick's distinction between broad and slender, it does indicate that there was a clear difference between them in his mind. I take this to mean that his *Choice* words are possibly pronounced [ɒ(:) i ~ ɑ(:)i], as we have just seen in Walker (i.e. *boy* and *toy* pronounced as if written *bâi* and *tâi* in French, that is, [ɑi], 1791, xv). Kenrick's *Price* words are rendered [ɛ(:)i ~ æ(:)i] and perhaps even [ai] as noted previously.

The data portrayed in Figures 28.5-28.7 appear to confirm much of what has been argued in Parts II, III and IV, namely, that there is undeniable historical continuity and interlinkage in the phonetic and phonemic development of earlier southern English sources and early American paritary and disparitary koine(s). In many fundamental respects, the phonology of GA and non-standard American varieties are the direct product of this history. During this period, we see that the frontiers between the so-called "polite" or "vulgar" were not always rigidly fixed in the minds of the orthoepists themselves, especially at a time when the offshoots of the old paritary English basilect were dominant in the poorer rural parish and urban communities of England and in English-speaking Wales, Scotland and Ireland more generally. Under such conditions, phonetic vacillation in any given word was perfectly normal and to be expected, as it is today, when one considers all spoken English varieties, non-standard or not.

4.4 Franklin's Contributions to Phonology

Based on what we have seen above, Franklin was a forerunner of many of the basic concepts of modern linguistics and phonology. His technical instincts and his quest for rational and scientific structure and order were, in many ways, well ahead of his time. Should this be a surprise considering that this is the man whose scientific experiments demonstrated that lightning was electricity? What follows is a list of contributions to phonology, concepts that are all found in one way or another in his RMS.

Although he does not specifically describe his vowels and consonants as “phonemes” (the term was not coined until one hundred years later), he understood the concept, that is, “minimal units of sound that, when contrasted, distinguish meaning.” This is proven by the way he orders his vowels and consonants (cf. Figs. 28.1, 28.2 and 28.3).

This brings us to the concept of minimal pairs. A minimal pair permits the linguist to distinguish between phonemes or meaningful units of sound. For instance, /p/ and /b/ are phonemes because we can contrast words like *pig* ~ *big* and this results in two separate meanings, whereas aspirated [p^h] and non-aspirated [p] are allophones (variants) and not phonemic, because the aspirated [p^h] of [p^hɪg] and its unaspirated counterpart [p] of [pɪg], do not change the meaning of the word. The same is true for the approximant [ɹ] of “rag” [ɹæɡ] and [r], its apical equivalent of [ræɡ]. Both are allophones or variant pronunciations of /r/. Using one or the other does not change the meaning of the word but pronouncing it with one or the other allophones does carry a geolinguistic or sociolinguistic message. Franklin was not interested in “allophones” (minor distinctions in the pronunciation of a phoneme). This is why I have described his system as “proto-phonemic,” because he understood the concept of the phoneme long before the concept was articulated.

As we saw above in Figure 28.1, he saw his vowel phonemes as being distinguished by quantity only and not by vowel quality, hence the opposition of vowels such as *sin* ~ *seen*, *did* ~ *deed*, *mem* (“Ma’am”) ~ *maim*. This was one of the arguments that suggests his *Kit* vowels were tense and not lax (i.e. as in French /i/, not contemporary GA/RP /ɪ/). We saw in Chapter 16 that this phenomenon was typical of the English spoken in 17th-century eastern England. So, in this respect, his entire system is more reminiscent of Middle English (at least with regard to his high and mid front vowels), where phonemicity is based on vowel length rather than the opposition of so-called “lax” and “tense” vowels, for instance, contemporary GA/RP; /i:/ vs /ɪ/ rather than Franklin’s /i:/ vs /i/. See my definition of “tense” vowels as opposed to “long” vowels in Chapters 16 and 17 and in the Glossary.

Another of his contributions to phonology was his decision to use one

phonemic symbol for one sound, not digraphs. We saw that he was not the inventor of this concept, an idea that was first proposed by the father of orthoepy, Sir Thomas Smith (1568).

One of his important contributions that he proposed in his RMS is the decision to use his <i> character to represent the <ee> sound, as it was represented during the 18th century. Webster stubbornly continued to use this <ee> in his own spelling system. We shall see in the next chapters that it was to his detriment. Franklin's approach allowed him to oppose long *ii* or *î* with his short *i*, hence his minimal pairs of [sin] ~ [si:n] mentioned above. This also permitted him to contrast phonemic long *ee* or *ê* with phonemic short e as indicated above in /mēm/ "Ma'am" versus /mē:m ~ mē:m/ "maim" and so on.

The fact that he does not indicate vowel length for the rest of his vowels has left linguists somewhat perplexed as how to analyze them. Nevertheless, as was suggested in the preceding chapters, he almost certainly opposed long and short *u* and long and short *o*. We came to this conclusion when analyzing his description of the following minimal pairs: the long [v:] of "awl," "fall" and "ball" and the short [v] in "John" and "folly." These same minimal pairs were contrasted by John Wallis and John Wilkins in the 17th century, as mentioned above; they too distinguished the vowels according to their length, not their quality, which they claimed was identical. This proves that Franklin did indeed consult their work (cf. Chapter 13). He may also have considered short /v/ [v:ʔ] to be inherently longer than other "short" vowels, hence his decision to double it (i.e. *aa*) (?). Consider his remark that *u* was shorter than other vowels. This sounds suspiciously like GA/RP /ʌ/ but, as we have seen it seems to correspond to "New England short u and short o," two vowels I identified in Chapters 20-22, which corresponded, at least initially, to [ʊ] and [ʊ̃] respectively. I don't believe they were ever phonemic.

As we have seen, Franklin chose orthographic <i> to represent his /i(:)/ phonemes. This <i>, of course, has the same value in French, Spanish, Italian and Latin, languages he knew. In this way, he was able to escape the trap many others had fallen into, namely, reverting to the traditional English spelling <ee> to represent /i:/, hence <a> for /ɛ(:)/, <aw> for /ɔ(:)/, <oo> for /u:/ and <u> for /ʌ/ and so on. It was a very clumsy system which has been unfortunately reproduced in a similar, but not identical, way in American dictionaries. Franklin's system is precisely the one that was adopted by the IPA over one hundred years later.

Franklin's representation of his consonantal system shows that he was far ahead of his time. We see in Figure 28.3, he not only presents the consonants in systematic back to front approach, but he also systematically opposes voiced and voiceless consonants. Wise (1948, 119) states that he believed that Franklin could not understand the concept of voiced and voiceless consonants. This is one of the rare points where I disagree with Wise, although I would acknowledge

that Franklin did not completely understand this distinction. I gave two reasons demonstrating that he did. First, as I have just stated, he systematically opposes voiceless and voiced /p/ ~ /b/, /t/ ~ /d/, /k/ ~ /g/, /f/ ~ /v/, /s/ ~ /z/, /θ/ ~ /ð/ and so on. Secondly, he invented terms, albeit clumsy ones, to identify these sounds with “dense” and “dull” meaning voiced and “thin” meaning voiceless.

Thanks to his manner of presenting vowels, we know that he understood the distinction between high, central and low vowels as well as back vowels, mid vowels and front vowels, and he systematically presents them as such. Likewise, we see from his presentation of his consonant system that he was intuitively capable of recognizing a glottal fricative, velar stops and nasals, palato-alveolar fricatives (except /ʒ/ which he presents as an affricate **ʒf**), apico-alveolars, labiodentals and bilabials. Although he did have terms for these concepts, once again, the nature of his presentation demonstrates that, without any doubt, he *understood* these concepts, proving his intuitive grasp of the fundamentals of articulatory phonetics.

We shall come back to these points when we return to Webster’s spelling reform and his refusal to adopt Franklin’s model.

Conclusion to Part IV

The main question that was asked in Part IV was whether Franklin consciously adopted the pronunciation of London’s upper crust for his RMS as a model for the British people of Great Britain and America. The answer appears to be a resounding yes. Nevertheless, the long list of New Englandisms discussed in the first section of this chapter demonstrates that he was not always able to erase the features of his idiolect from his system and they occasionally float to the surface of his RMS. This suggests that, despite his and Polly Stevenson’s best attempts, he was not fully successful in reproducing his London model. We have seen that some of the features such as *ynlarn’d* “unlearned” or *perfektlɪ* “perfectly” are conservatismisms that were shared by both older rural Englishmen and colonial Americans at the time. This is quite normal at a time when no single model of pronunciation had been “fix’d,” as both Samuel Johnson and Polly Stevenson expressed it. Basilectal/badume varieties were the norm throughout most areas of Britain at the time (cf. Chapters 10-12 of Part II). This is a time where codification was still underway, standardization was not yet fully established and yet, contrary to what one might think (Wright, 2000), individual orthoepists adopted prescriptive attitudes.

Very significantly for the sociolinguist, Franklin’s “modified” RMS accent seems also to represent his personal attempt to adopt what he believed to be a more sophisticated or trendy London accent during in his fifteen-year stay there, and one wonders to what degree he was able to code-switch from a disparitary

London register to a paritary one. If so, given the numerous New Englandisms that resurface in his RMS, he was not totally successful in his attempt.

Despite his best intentions, we see the system that was adopted in his RMS reflects a number of features that orthoepists such as Walker (1791) would have considered vulgar, such as the centralization of *Mercy* words, which he naturally pronounced “correctly” as either [ɛɪ] (or “less correctly” as [æɪ]). Likewise his native New England raising of *Bath* words to [bæ:θ ~ bɛ:θ] would have been considered quite elegant. Of course, these pronunciations would have clashed with his archaic *Meat* [mɛ:t] and *Happy* [ˈhæpəɪ] words.

As we saw in Part I, it should be recalled that, until 1765-1775, the North American colonists, and most especially Franklin, viewed themselves not only as North Americans but also, as Englishmen and Britons who were members of the British Empire. All this changed after 1765, especially as the demographics of the colonial population began to shift with the arrival of massive numbers of “Scots-Irish (i.e. “northern Britons”) and, in the South, Africans.

After the Revolution and during the early 19th century (Duponceau, 1818), we saw a number of examples showing that sociolinguistic attitudes towards language propriety were beginning to diverge in both countries. The tendency even before the Revolution was that the Americans clung to older formerly prestigious forms. Nevertheless, as we shall see in Part V, and much to the chagrin of Noah Webster, the influence of standard London English grammar and innovative Proto-RP phonology was retained as a model in America by educated Americans for over a century after Franklin's death in 1790. This too explains why, after 250 years of cultural and political separation, the disparitary linguistic standards of the two countries are, despite their obvious differences, surprisingly similar. In many respects, the same can be said of traditional East Coast non-standard American varieties and those of rural England (cf. Viereck, 1985).

Very significantly, however, both varieties were deviating from a common root, but often in different directions, with the GA accent always more conservative than the RP model. This is still the case to this day, a fact which can only be explained by the theoretical arguments presented in Part II.

We turn now to Part V to examine Franklin's unknown, but eminent, legacy as a spelling reformer and phonetician.

PART V.

FRANKLIN'S LINGUISTIC LEGACY

Introduction to Part V

Part V is composed of Chapters 29 and 30 and explores Franklin's legacy as a phonetician and spelling reformer. The first part of Chapter 29 is devoted to a discussion relating to the impact that Franklin's RMS may have had on the work of his friend and fellow Whig, Sir William Jones. More specifically, I focus on the possibility that Franklin may have inspired Jones to conceive his own phonetic alphabet to transliterate non-European languages using an adapted script, which he presented in 1786 in his ground-breaking treatise entitled *A Dissertation on the Orthography of Asiatick Words in Roman Letters*. Several arguments will be presented demonstrating the likelihood of this.

The first point is that Franklin and Jones were long-time friends who had known each other for many years. Along with other luminaries, they had met on Thursday nights every two weeks at St Paul's Coffee-house in London in a gathering Franklin nicknamed the "Club of Honest Whigs" (Crane, 1966).

During these meetings, they discussed a wide range of topics ranging from science, literature, religion to politics and it is difficult to believe that the subject of language did not crop up from time to time, particularly since Franklin was meeting regularly with these men at the time he conceived his RMS.

Secondly, I propose that Jones had read Franklin's RMS (1779) prior to publishing his *Dissertation on the Orthography of Asiatick Words in Roman Letters*. In this same study, he states that he did. Burridge (2013) has argued that Jones' transcription scheme of "Asiatick" languages is a major work that set the stage leading to the conception and implementation of the IPA. If so, I think it is only appropriate that Franklin's role in this endeavour, however modest it may have been, should also be acknowledged. I would argue, however, that Jones and Franklin are only two men in a long list of orthoepists whose work contributed to its foundation, Hart (1569), Wilkins (1658), Lodwick (1686) and, perhaps, Sir Thomas Smith being the most deserving of this title in my opinion (cf. Chapter 13).

The second half of this chapter and all of Chapter 30 concentrate on the ways Franklin's RMS, either directly or indirectly, determined the characteristics of American orthography as we know it today. Here evidence of his influence is incontrovertible and is directly tied to the direct assistance that Franklin gave

to Noah Webster (cf. Chapter 13 for further discussion). There is no doubt that his RMS instigated Webster's life-long crusade to create a unified, national, American standard English model of pronunciation as well as a corresponding orthographic spelling system that would free the Americans from the idiosyncrasies of what he viewed to be an ever-changing, elitist, class-based London-centred model. The irony is that this stands in total contradiction to Franklin's original aim (cf. Chapter 14, Part II, Volume I). There are indications that there were tensions between the two men on this point.

Indeed, paradoxically, many American intellectuals were firmly attached to the British proto-RP model throughout much of the 19th century, to a degree that has been greatly underestimated by most Americans today. Nevertheless, despite Franklin's early partiality for London English and his hope that it would serve as a model for all members of the British Empire, whether American or British, Webster was a lone voice in defining an American model of language propriety, even in America.

Contrary to the popular conception of Webster's scheme, he strongly believed that the new American model should be based on a conservative phonological, grammatical and lexical model of English which, in his mind, was far preferable to the one that was being instituted by Sheridan, Kenrick, Nares and Walker during second half of the 18th century. In many respects, Franklin's native Massachusetts variety corresponded to this older form of English (Part III of this volume) imagined by Webster. One senses that Franklin agreed with Webster to some degree on this point.

As it turns out, we shall see that Webster was a far better lexicographer than he was a phonetician and, in this regard, he lagged far behind Franklin in his ability to institute a workable orthographic system. His flat refusal to adopt the most practical of Franklin's phonetic principles explains, to a large degree, its ultimate failure. Some of Webster's earliest spelling proposals were clearly inspired by Franklin's RMS, but we shall discover that the anglophile American editors of his successive dictionaries progressively weeded out his most radical spelling innovations. Nevertheless, if the impetus for the spelling reform came from Franklin, the precise orthographic modifications were codified by Webster, many of which had already been in common use among 18th-century English writers. In this sense, the current American orthographic system can be credited to the influence of Franklin's RMS, a fact for which he is rarely given credit.

29. Franklin's Influence on Sir William Jones and Noah Webster

1. Franklin and Sir William Jones

Sir William Jones was born in London in 1746 to an English mother, Mary Nix, and a Welsh-speaking father from Anglesey, William “Longitude” Jones (1675-1749), a well-known mariner and mathematician. As his nickname suggests, he was famous for his contributions to the art of maritime navigation and was also a close friend of Isaac Newton. William Jones Jr. was raised bilingually in Welsh and English, albeit in London, and his bilingual upbringing combined with his classical education must have inspired him to study languages, for which he had a particular talent. In addition, he was especially drawn to what were considered exotic languages in his day (Persian, Sanskrit, Arabic, Hebrew...). Like Franklin, his powerful dissident views on religion were to have a strong influence on his political opinions. As a young man, Jones firmly supported the American colonists’ cause and, like many British Whigs, he saw the American struggle to be one and the same as that of the British common people and middle classes more generally. It is important to recall that, the growing cultural rift between Americans and Englishmen was sparked, in large part, by the Crown’s high-handedness and insensitivity regarding the plight of colonists during the French and Indian Wars (cf. Part I, Volume I). Faulty political decisions, chief among which was the subsequent imposition of taxes, and the refusal to give the Americans a voice in Parliament was the final straw. As we shall see below, Jones seriously considered immigrating to Pennsylvania, where he hoped to pursue a career in law.

As noted above, Sir William Jones is perhaps best known for his *Dissertation on the Orthography of Asiatick Words in Roman Letters*, which he delivered before the Transactions of the Asiatick Society in 1786, the same year that Webster met Franklin in Philadelphia to discuss the question of an orthographic modernization of the English language. Jones’ “Dissertation” is perhaps best known for his announcement that the Sanskrit language is directly related to both Greek and Latin and that the three all stem from a common ancestor. In his

discussion of the Hindi language he writes his famous passage.

The *Sanscrit* language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the *Greek*, more copious than the *Latin*, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologer could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists; there is a similar reason, though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the *Gothic* and the *Celtic*, though blended with a very different idiom, had the same origin with the *Sanscrit*; and the old *Persian* might be added to the same family. (Jones, 1786, 497)

For this discovery, Jones has often been credited with being the founder of Indo-European Studies as well as Comparative and Historical Linguistics. It should be noted, however, that he was preceded in this by the French Jesuit, Gaston-Laurent Coeurdoux, who presented a paper in 1767, entitled “*Mémoires to the Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*” which he delivered to the French *Académie des sciences*, in which he made the same connection between Sanskrit and the European languages. The question is whether Jones made this discovery independently or whether he had gotten wind of Coeurdoux’s work beforehand. If he did, he makes no mention of it. Suffice it to say that, as a brilliant linguist who was proficient not only in Greek and Latin, but also Sanskrit and other languages, it is hard to believe that Jones would not have made the connection on his own.

The idea of the European languages sharing the same origin (with the exception of Basque, Finnish and Hungarian) was not new, however, and the hypothesis can be traced back at least as early as 1703 when the Breton Abbot Paul-Yves Pezron, in his *Antiquité de la nation et de la langue des Celtes, autrement appelez Gaulois*, proposed the fanciful hypothesis that the Celts (or Gauls) were the direct descendants of Gomer via Japheth, the son of Noah. As such, he claimed that the Breton language, along with its sister language, Welsh, were descendants of the ancient “Celtic” or “Gaulish” language which (being akin to Hebrew!) was not only the mother language from which all other European languages had sprung but, significantly, the oldest language of all Mankind. Not only was Breton the oldest language of all mankind but, significantly, the mother language from which all other European languages had sprung. Note that in his *Dissertations* (1789), Webster accepts this link between Celtic and Hebrew suggesting that he was aware (or had been made aware) of the link between Welsh, Breton (Armoric as he calls it), and Hebrew. It is Pezron’s work which inspired Edward Llyud’s to write his famous *Archaeologia Britannica* (1707). His work, however, presents a far more scientific account than Pezron’s. The concept of a phylogenetic origin of language was thus not a novel one and, given Jones’ Welsh origins, he was undoubtedly familiar with both Pezron and

Lluyd's contributions.¹ So was Franklin for the reasons outlined in Chapter 13 (cf. Part II, Volume I).

As stated above, scholars such as Kate Burridge (2013) have claimed Jones' transcription of the "Asiatick" languages into Roman script provided the impetus which eventually led to the creation of the International Phonetic Alphabet by Paul Passy and his associates at the end of the 19th century.² However, this would be to forget 16th-century orthoepists such as John Hart (1564) who conceived a very workable phonologically-based orthography which transcribed the English of his time and he also used to transcribe the Lord's Prayer into French. But, to my knowledge, it was Francis Lodwick, who followed him by more than a century, who presented the first veritable project for a truly international phonetic alphabet in his "Essay towards an Universal Alphabet" (Lodwick, 1686) which would permit men to read multiple languages using the same script

The Univerfall Alphabet .

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<i>The Table af Confonants</i>							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	γ 6	γ d	η j	γ g	γ =	q =	P l β C h
2	h p	h t	h ch	h k	h =	q =	
3	m m	m n	m gn	m ng	m =	m =	
4	b =	b dh	b g	b g	b v	q z	
5	b =	b th	b sh	b cf	b f	q s	
6		h n					
	8	9	10	11	12		
	η m	γ y	h w	q v	l N		

<i>The Table of Vowels</i>									
α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ λ μ ν ξ ο π ρ σ τ υ φ χ ψ ω									
α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ λ μ ν ξ ο π ρ σ τ υ φ χ ψ ω									
α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ λ μ ν ξ ο π ρ σ τ υ φ χ ψ ω									
1	β	h	n	w	k	z	ε	n	κ
2	h	m	m	m	y	z	β	γ	γ
3	h	ng	ng	pg	m	β	f	γ	κ
4	h	m	ny	μ	f	β	f	o	z
5	h	h							

Fig. 29.1 Lodwick's "An Universal Alphabet" (copied from Abercrombie, 1948, 9).

- 1 The long-held idea that Welsh is "the oldest language in Europe" has its origins in Pezron's work, an idea that was developed by Theophilus Evans in his *Drych y Prifoesoedd* (*Mirror of the First Ages*, 1716).
- 2 Passy is the only linguist to have ever been awarded the Nobel Prize (1900).

After presenting a table of vowels and consonants accompanied by diacritics to distinguish pertinent sounds, Jones begins his *Dissertation* by stating that the study of foreign writing systems requires the need for a single system of notation to transcribe languages such as Arabic, Farsi and Sanskrit.

Every man, who has occasion to compose tracts on Asiatick literature, or to translate from the Asiatick languages, must always find it convenient, and sometimes necessary, to express Arabian, Indian and Persian words, or sentences, in the characters generally used among Europeans; and almost every writer in those circumstances, has a method of notation peculiar to himself: but none has yet appeared in the form of a complete system, so that each original sound may be rendered invariably by one appropriated symbol, conformably to the natural order of articulation, and with a due regard to the primitive power of the Roman alphabet, which modern Europe has in general adopted. (Jones, 1786, 1-2)

Jones then goes on to present the practical advantages of the transcription of “Asiatick” languages (Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, etc.) through the use of the Roman Alphabet and describes the vowels and consonants he uses in his system. In order to assist his readers in understanding his approach and to illustrate the benefits of it, he provides adapted transcriptions of two poems, one in French and the other in English. The French poem is a passage taken from the poet Malherbe and his transcription is preceded with the following remark:

Let us conceive an Englishman, acquainted with their language, to be pleased with Malherbe's well-known imitation of Horace, and desirous of quoting it in some piece of criticism : he would read it thus: *La mort a des rigueurs à nulle autre pareilles* ... Would he then express these eight verses, in Roman characters, exactly as the French themselves in fact express them ; or would he decorate his composition with a passage more resembling *the dialect of savages* (my italics), than that of a polished nation? His pronunciation, good or bad, would, perhaps, be thus represented: Law more aw day reegywrs aw nool otruh parellyuh...

Regardless of whether this attempt was intended to amuse the reader, as some have suggested, this attempt at transcribing French is quite disastrous, and which I would render as follows in modern standard French: [la 'mɔː.ɪ α 'nʊl 'ɔtɪə pa'ɛiə] rather than [la 'mɔɪ α nʏl,ɔtɪ(ə) pa'ɛi(ə)].³ Hart's attempt to transcribe French 222 years before was far more successful and precise (cf. Chapter 13). Nevertheless, it does give the reader an idea of Jones' objectives and his mode of transcription which, in certain respects, resembles Webster's system more than it does Franklin's, that is, he adds no new characters and relies on conventional spellings (<ee> for [i:], <oo> for [u:]). Indeed, Franklin's influence on Jones certainly did not extend to his scheme of transcription; rather, Jones argued that a clear system of orthography based on the Roman alphabet was needed for the purposes of

3 It is probable that Malherbe would have had an apical /r/ at this time, however.

transcribing non-European languages. Given the close connection between Jones and Franklin, Franklin may have informed Webster that Jones' *Dissertation* had just recently been published when the two men met in Philadelphia in the fall of 1786. It is entirely possible, if not likely, that Webster studied Jones's work and actually preferred his scheme to Franklin's RMS which he viewed, like Jones, as overly complex and somewhat frightening.⁴

Jones then goes on to transcribe a stanza taken from Addison's poem entitled "Campaign," originally composed in 1704. This is not only the same poem but also the same stanza that Franklin transcribed in his RMS (although Franklin's includes a second stanza). This, I believe, is an unspoken tribute to his friend Franklin and their shared Whiggish political beliefs, which I take to be a code between condemning the abusive powers of the monarchy.

Unlike Franklin, however, Jones' intention appears to have been to demonstrate how phonetic transcriptions can serve, not only to acquire an accurate pronunciation of non-European languages but also as an instrument to highlight errors of pronunciation and faulty rhymes in English or French or, for that matter, any language. The pedagogical, social and, ultimately, the political dimension of such an alphabet that was imagined by Franklin appears to be lacking in Jones' approach.

Jones purposefully transcribes the Addison poem using non-standard or even "vulgar" pronunciations to highlight how his alphabet could avoid problems of using an incorrect accent. Jones states that:

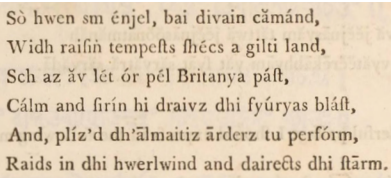
I should write Addison's description of the angel in the following manner, distinguishing the simple breathing, or first element, which we cannot invariably omit, by a perpendicular line over our first or second vowel... *This mode of writing poetry would be the touchstone of bad rhymes, which the eye, as well as the ear, would instantly detect; as in the first couplet of this description, and even in the last, according to the common pronunciation of the word perform* (my italics). (Jones, 1786, 33)

Nevertheless, no allusion whatsoever is made to Franklin as the source of this passage. Compare Jones' and Franklin's transcriptions below.

So when some angel, by divine command
With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,
Such as of late o'er Britannia past,
Calm and serene hi drives the furious blast,
And, pleas'd th'almighty's ardours to perform
Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm.

⁴ Both titles are somewhat similar: Jones' "A Dissertation on the Orthography of Asiatick Words in Roman Letters" (1786) and Webster's *Dissertations on the English Language* (1789). Given that Webster praises the quality of Jones' written English in his *Dissertations*, it is possible that he studied Jones' text or was at least aware of its theme and contents.

Fig. 29.2 Sir William Jones’ transcription of Addison’s “The Campaign,” 1788, public domain, https://archive.org/details/asiaticresearche01asia_0/page/n13/mode/2up?q=addison

Jones’ 1786 transcription (1786, 33)	The IPA equivalent
	//So hwen s ^ə m 'ɛ:ndʒel / bai di'vain ka'ma:nd wið 'raizɪŋ 'tempest ʃe:ks a 'gilti lænd/ s ^ə tʃ æz əv 'lɛ:t ɔɪ 'pɛ:l brɪ'tænja 'pæ:st/ 'ka(:)lm ænd sɪ'i:n hi 'dʒaivz ði 'fju:ʒas 'bla:st/ ænd pli:zd ða:lmaɪtɪz 'ɑ:rdɛrz tu pɜr'fɔ(:)ɪm/ Raidz ɪn ði 'hwɜrlwɪnd / ænd dai'ɛkts ði stɑ:ɪm//

Jones’ system is uncertain. Considering that his <é> probably corresponds to French /ɛ/, one would expect his <á> to correspond to French /a:/ (or perhaps /æ:/?), hence <cāmánd> [kə'ma:nd]. If so, this would also mean that <cálm>, <pást> and <blást> should also be pronounced [a:]. Recall that /æ:/ and even /ɛ:/ was the posh pronunciation in London at this time. The quality of his <a> in <land> and <and> and may simply represent [æ] and <ǎ> [ə]. The faulty rhyme in the first couplet would thus be the result of the contrast between long, slightly lowered /a:/ as opposed to /æ:/ [kə'ma:nd] versus [lænd].

Having been raised in London in a well-to-do family, it is very improbable that Jones pronounced words such as “command” and “land” as [æ] in these contexts as well as before <nch>, <nce>, <ss>, <st>, <lf>, etc., rather than the lowered [a: ~ ɑ:] realizations that were considered vulgar in both London and in America at this time (except by Webster). Nevertheless, Nares (1784) also accepts this lowered pronunciation, showing that this innovation was slowly gaining acceptance. Of course, lower /a:/ has since been integrated into the RP system while GA has conserved the older /æ/ realization. Interestingly, on this point, Webster (1789) incorrectly believed that this lowered realization was the original English pronunciation and, for this reason, he sided with Nares (1784).

Mazarin’s analysis of this passage is similar to my own. He writes “I notice that when Jones transcribes Addison’s rhyme *land* ~ *command* as *land*, *cāmánd*, he mentions that the rhyme is “bad,” which suggests that he said [lænd, kɔma:nd] rather than *[kɔmæ:nd]” (Mazarin, 2020, 13). This observation is also significant in the sense that it shows that poets of the time were aiming at perfect or near-perfect rhymes.

The <ǎ> of <ǎlmaitiz>, <ǎrderz> and <stǎrm> appears to represent either /ɑ:/ or /ɒ:/. I have chosen the French realization of <ǎ> here, which would favour the first choice, hence /ɑ:lmaɪtɪz/, /ɑ:ɪdɛrz/ and /stɑ:ɪm/. Taking into account the high-mid value of his French <é> /ɛ(:)/, I interpret his <ó> in <perfórm> to represent a high-mid back vowel /ɔ(:)/ or /ɒ(:)/. The final couplet is imperfect

in Jones' eyes on account of the difference in the quality and the vowels of and <stārm> [stɑ:ɪm] for "storm" and <perfórm> /pɛɪ'fɔ:(:).ɪm/.

Mazarin (2020, 7) also comes to the same conclusion that Sir William Jones in the 1780s transcribes *storm*, *orders*, and *Almighty* with long back Continental but *perform* and *o'er* 'over' with long high-mid (GOAT–FORCE).

As we saw in Chapter 26, <or> spellings are realized as [ɒɪ] by Franklin, whereas he pronounces <ar> spellings as [æ(:).ɪ]. The pronunciation of <ā> before <l> and <ɪ> suggests the long pronunciation [ɒ: ~ ɑ:], not [ɔ:] as in contemporary RP and appears to reflect the older pronunciation advocated by Franklin.

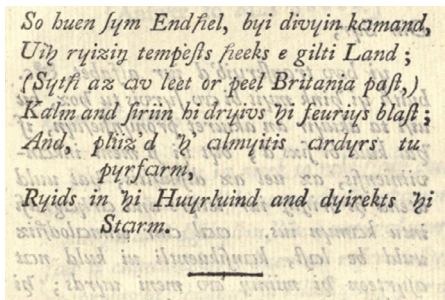
Note, however, that <ñ> represents the velar nasal /ŋ/, hence <raisin> "rising" should be interpreted as [ˈɹaɪzɪŋ] and that Jones now has /ai/ for *Price* words and no longer /əi/ or even /ei/ or /ai/ as proposed by Kenrick (1773). Reductions <sm> [səm] for "some" and <sch> [sʰtʃ] for "such" and reflects a paritary register

In a footnote, Alexander Ellis (1869, 1060) is aware Jones is transcribing the same passage from Addison as Franklin did, writing the following: "Dr. Franklin is not consistent in marking the long and short vowels. His peculiarities and errors are here all reproduced." Sir William Jones (Works, 4to. ed. 1799, i. 205), after giving his analysis of sound for the purpose of transliterating the Indian languages, adds: "Agreeably to the preceding analysis of letters, if I were to adopt a new mode of English orthography, I should write Addison's description of the angel in the following manner, distinguishing the simple breathing or first element, which we cannot invariably omit, by a perpendicular line above our first or second vowel." To my knowledge, Ellis and Mazarin are the only scholars to have noticed this connection. Mazarin writes:

Sir William Jones tipped his hat to Franklin by transcribing the same six lines of Addison's epic "The Campaign" that Franklin transcribed in Ref. [20]. (Mazarin, 2020, footnote 17)

Now let us compare Jones' transcription to Franklin's.

Fig. 29.3 Franklin's transcription of Addison's "The Campaign" (from Vaughan, 1779).

Franklin's 1779 transcription: the "Campaign"	The IPA equivalent
	//so 'hwen sɑm 'e:ndʒel / bɑi dr'vaɪn kɑ'mænd, wɪð 'ɹaɪzɪŋ 'tempests 'fɛ:ks ɛ 'gɪltɪ 'lænd; 'sɑtʃ əz ɒv 'le:t and ɔɪ 'pɛ:l br'ɪtəniə 'pæst 'kælm ænd si'ɹi:n hi 'dɹaɪvz ði 'fɛʊɹiəs 'blæst; ænd 'pli:zd ðɒl'maɪtɪz 'ɒɹdɜ:z tu pɜ:fɔ:ɹm, 'ɹaɪdz ɪn ði 'hwaɪlwind ænd dɑɪ'rekts ði 'stɔ:ɹm// *Note that Franklin's ɥ is realized here with its London innovative value /ʌ/, not with Massachusetts [ɹ ~ ɻ]

As noted above, Jones ME long /i:/ is already pronounced [ai ~ æi] (cf. Kenrick's [ɛi ~ æi] realization in Chapter 16) as opposed to Franklin's [əi ~ ɹi], showing that Jones may also have interpreted this more modern [ai ~ æi] pronunciation to be vulgar, as many older speakers apparently still did, including Polly Stevenson of Kensington, London. Note too that Jones indicates the glide [j] where Franklin introduces either [i] or [ɛ] (cf. *Britannia* and *furious*), also considered to be vulgar by Franklin and older speakers.

Overall, when we compare the two transcriptions, Franklin's is more accurate in reproducing the intended quality of the vowels. Jones' objective, of course was to do the opposite, to demonstrate how a phonetic spelling could highlight rhyming errors. As we saw in Chapter 25, his scheme reproduces the disparitary register as he imagined it should be spoken by "polite" speakers in England and America during the 1760s.⁵

Nevertheless, Jones takes into account sentence stress and the vowel length of back and low vowels, which Franklin does not do.

1.2 Jones' and Franklin's Friendship and Correspondence

I mentioned above that Jones and Franklin were members of the same Club of Honest Whigs while he served as an agent for the American colonies. Its official name was "The Club of Thirteen, Friends of Science and Liberty" and met every two weeks at St. Paul's coffee-house until 1772 and, afterwards, at the London coffee-house. There the members, such as Joseph Priestley and Richard Price, engaged in discussions about all matter of subjects including literature, philosophy, religion, science and, of course, politics. In 1775, Franklin was forced to leave London for Philadelphia in disgrace after having failed to stave off the inevitable secession of the colonies from Great Britain.

A total of ten letters have survived between the two men which testifies to their friendship. A few extracts from Jones to Franklin provides sufficient evidence of this fact. Furthermore, as a Whig, Jones was in favour of the American cause and fully expresses this in his letters in the middle of the American War of Independence. This is yet another indication that British Whigs did not view the Americans as enemies or foreigners but rather as brethren who were literally fighting for the same principles of liberty. The following letter was written on September 17, 1781, just ten days before the American and French Armies were to besiege General Cornwallis' British Army at Yorktown, Virginia. This was the final battle of the American War of Independence which resulted in Cornwallis'

5 Furthermore, Franklin advocates capitalizing substantives (particularly deverbal nouns) to avoid confusion with verbs: <a Subject> as opposed to <to subject>. The continuation of this older English practice was on the recommendation of a "French gentlemen" who expressed difficulty distinguishing the substantives and verbs when reading English texts.

surrender, thus marking the end of the fighting between the two sides.

The negotiations between Great Britain, France and the United States were held in Paris. Franklin led the American delegation (cf. Chapter 9, Part I, Volume I). During these negotiations, Jones was sent to Passy to meet officially with Franklin, probably on the instigation of their mutual friend, Lord Shelbourne. As we saw in Chapter 25, Benjamin Vaughan, Franklin's editor and fellow Whig, was also summoned by the British government to consult with Franklin on their behalf.

My dear Sir and much-respected Friend,

...You can have no enemies, but the enemies of Virtue; and, as I flatter myself that I am *her* firm friend, I hope you will allow me to be ranked among those, who are most faithfully and inviolably *Yours*... All virtue and publick spirit are dead in this country (i.e. in England): we have the *shadow* merely of a free constitution but live in truth under the *substance* of despotism...

In this short passage, Jones flatters Franklin by twice associating him with the cause of "Virtue" which I take to be an allusion to Franklin's "Art of Virtue" which, in addition to his RMS, he may have read.

The following year, Jones wrote to Franklin informing him of the opposition of the House of Commons to the continuation of war with the Americans. Jones' hostility towards King George III is striking and was written at a time when Jones was contemplating emigrating to Pennsylvania in order to practice law.

My dear and venerable friend,

I have no wish to grow old in England; for, believe me, I would rather be a peasant with freedom than a prince in an enslaved country. (my italics) You will have heard, before you receive this, that on the morning of the 28th. Febr. there was a majority of nineteen in the house of commons for a cessation of hostilities against the Americans; and an address was presented on the first of this month conformably to that vote: the king's answer was in substance "I do not want your advice, and will do as I please:" the precise words were reported yesterday, when the opposition, affecting to consider the answer as a full compliance, moved and carried without a division, first, an *address* of thanks for such compliance, and, next, a *resolution* that, "whoever should advise the king to continue offensive war against the Americans, or attempt their reduction by force, would be highly criminal and an enemy to his country." ... *There is, I find, a translation of Anacreon in verse, under the name of Addison: it is rather scarce, but, if procurable, shall be sent to you* (my italics). (Jones to Franklin, March 2, 1782)

The reference in the last line is to John Addison's translation of Anacreon's poetry.⁶ This is of some significance because the first edition was printed by

⁶ Not to be confused with Joseph Addison, the co-editor of the *Spectator*, who died in 1719.

John Watts' Printing House in 1735 where Franklin had worked as a young man. More important, however, is that this brief reference signals that both Franklin and Jones were in the habit of discussing literary matters and, very probably that Jones knew him well enough to know that he had worked at Watts' Printing House as a young man.

In the following letter dated November 15, 1782, Jones once again repeats the high esteem in which Franklin was still held in England by his Whig allies and friends. It is striking that, at a time when Franklin was collaborating with Great Britain's French archenemies in Paris, his friends in England were toasting his health and, if one reads between the lines, toasting the success of the American Revolutionaries whom they secretly must have viewed as championing the causes of the British common people.

My dear and respected Friend,

We were always talking of you in Hampshire, and longing to enjoy again your sweet society: sometimes we were charmed with tidings, that you were coming with an olive wreath to England; at other times we were afflicted with reports of your labouring under a painful illness. I hope to be relieved to-day from that affliction, as I dine with Mr. Hodgson, who, I hope, has heard from you lately. Your friends of the club will heartily join in drinking your health and wishing you among them.

These passages divulge that not only did the two men deeply like and respect each other, but that they also shared the same political views and outlooks regarding the English Constitution and the English Bill of Rights alluded to above and the rights of the common "Englishman" which, of course, included the "American" colonists (cf. William Pitt the Elder's speech before the House of Lords in early 1775 in defence of Franklin, Chapter 8). As I have stated elsewhere, I believe that it is for this reason that both men chose to cite Addison's "The Campaign," perhaps a code between them attacking the concept of the Divine Right of Kings and the defeat of their despotic regimes. Recall that Franklin's uncle Benjamin had also composed a long poem celebrating Louis XIV's defeat for the same reasons.

Another point on which they agreed was the religious dimension of their cause. Jones, was a devout Christian and non-conformist, as was Reverend Richard Price, another Welsh dissident, and we once again see a resurfacing of the old British tradition of blending Christian moral fervour in the defence of social causes (Paradise & Jones, 1779). An example of this practice is to be seen in a number of pamphlets sent by Priestley to Franklin, not to mention published correspondence with Rev. Richard Price (cf. March 11 for his attack on the Tories). Price had published several essays entitled *Two Tracts on Civil Liberty, the War with America, and the Debts and Finances of the Kingdom ...* (London, 1778) and

A Sermon, Delivered to a Congregation of Protestant Dissenters ... (London, 1779) defending the sovereignty of the people, and their right, whether American or British, to have a greater voice in governing themselves.

1.3 Sir William Jones, Contributor the IPA

As alluded to above, in her chapter to the *Oxford Handbook of the History of Linguistics* entitled “19th-Century Study of Sound Change from Rask to Saussure,” Kate Burridge (2013, 144-145) highlights Sir William Jones’ contribution to the creation of an international phonetic alphabet, arguing that his knowledge of phonetics was “substantial and comparable to Grimm’s successors.” About his *Dissertation on the Orthography of Asiatick Words in Roman Letters* she writes:

William Jones sought a scientific system of transliteration. Dissatisfied with Latin orthography, unable even to represent adequately the sounds of English, he created a mini phonetic notation, capable of rendering the sounds of several languages. He provided an analysis of each of his symbols, and on page 205 of his “Dissertation” he illustrated his script with some lines of Joseph Addison’s poem “The Campaign.” (Burridge, 2013, 144-145)

In conclusion to this discussion, Franklin and Jones certainly discussed many fascinating subjects together face-to-face at St Paul’s Coffee-house, including linguistic matters and other subjects of common interest. Jones’ allusions to his “virtue” (cf. Franklin’s “Art of Virtue”) and his decision to transcribe the same stanza of Joseph Addison’s “Campaign” strongly suggest that he was well familiar with Franklin’s opinions and beliefs.

However, whether he agreed with Franklin’s dream of modernizing English spelling along the lines presented in his proposal is an entirely different matter. The objectives of the two men in designing schemes for transcription appear to have been different. Franklin’s goals, like Spence’s, were altruistic and designed to assist the illiterate in their quest to read and acquire learning, while Jones’ interest in phonetic transcription appears to have been primarily practical, literary and linguistic.

Although he does not cite the reasons for his assertion, Mazarin (2020, footnote 17) is the only other linguist of whom I am aware, along with Alexander Ellis (1869), to have made the connection between Franklin and Jones’ transcriptions of Joseph Addison’s “The Campaign.” The political significance of this citation has been lost on most observers, signifying the radical Whigs’ delight at seeing the following:

Inspired by “Dr. Franklin,” Sir William Jones inaugurated the principle that we still use for romanizing words like yoga, sushi, and Chekhov – namely, to spell

consonants as in English but vowels as in Italian.⁷

Recall that Franklin's vocalic system is entirely based on the direct continental (French, Italian, Spanish...) spelling correspondences of <i>, <e>, <a>, <o>, <u>, <æ> with IPA /i/, /ɛ/, /æ/, /ɔ/, /u/, /ɒ ~ ɑ/ rather than traditional English <ee> /i:/, <oo> /u/, etc. which, on account of the GVS, skewed the realizations of the Middle English graphemes.

Of course, Franklin's method of representing the English vocalic system was adopted by the founders of the IPA one hundred years later. Although it is uncertain whether Franklin's system had any direct impact on the fathers of the IPA, if it were the case, the most likely candidate to have promoted his contribution was Alexander Ellis who had studied Franklin's RMS in depth. Regardless of how tenuous this possibility may be, Franklin should nevertheless be considered as one of the forerunners of this application of the concept with regard to English. As we shall see below, Webster's orthographic system failed in large part because he refused to adopt Franklin's model preferring the traditional English system: <ee> for /i:/, <oo> for /u:/, etc.

I am convinced that Jones' attempt to create a phonetic system to transcribe non-European languages may have been partly inspired by Franklin's approach. Nevertheless, on page 23 of his essay "On the Orthography of Asiatic Words," he writes that he is against the idea of inventing a new character to express the /tʃ/ of "China":

it might, perhaps, be more properly denoted, as it is in the great work of M. D'Herbelot, by *tsh*; but the inconvenience of retaining our own symbol will be less than that of introducing a new combination, or inventing, after the example of Dr. Franklin, a new character.

In fact, Franklin did not invent a single character for <ch> but rather considered it a cluster composed of /t/ + /ʃ/, hence his <*tʃ*> character for IPA /tʃ/. Just as Webster announced in his *Dissertations on the English Language* in 1789, Jones also rejects Franklin's decision to replace digraphs with a single-character. Nevertheless, this passage proves without doubt that Jones, like Webster, had indeed read his RMS (albeit not very closely). He may even have discussed the matter with him and Joseph Priestley (cf. below) during their bimonthly reunions.

Even without his possible influence on Jones, Franklin should also be included in the illustrious lineage of those phoneticians who were the predecessors of

7 I am not quite certain about the precise meaning of André Mazarin's remark regarding the spelling of "consonants as in English but vowels as in Italian" and have found nothing in Franklin's writings to date to confirm his comment. What he probably means is that Franklin's <ii> and <i> correspond to IPA [i:] and [i], <ee> and <e> correspond to IPA [e: ~ ε:] and [ɛ ~ ɛ], etc.

the International Phonetic Alphabet going back to Sir Thomas Smith, John Hart, John Wallis, John Wilkins, Alexander Gil and others (cf. Chapter 13 and Synopsis and General Conclusions).

2. Franklin and Noah Webster: An Ambiguous Relationship

Noah Webster was born in West Hartford, Connecticut in 1758. Although his parents were of modest origin, they valued education. Webster's father, a farmer and minister, even mortgaged his house to pay for his son's education. This might be explained by his parents' Puritan respect for learning but also their prestigious family background. His mother was a direct descendant of William Bradford, the second governor of the Plymouth Colony (1621-1632)⁸ and his father was the descendant of John Webster (1590-1661), former governor of Connecticut (1656-1657) and its chief magistrate (1657-1659).

Noah Webster graduated from Yale in 1779 where he received a degree in the humanities. He was a schoolteacher for a time but, disappointed with the low pay, he decided to study law instead. After overcoming a bout with depression, partially linked to financial obstacles, he was admitted to the bar in 1781, all of this in the middle of the American Revolution. During this time, he was a fervent supporter of the American cause and, although he never served in combat, he was a member of the Connecticut militia. During this same year, while Benjamin Franklin was still negotiating the conditions for a peace treaty between the United States, France and Great Britain, and only one year before Great Britain finally recognized American Independence, Webster wrote an essay highlighting American cultural superiority over Europe and, in particular, over England. This extract sets the tone for all that followed.

America sees the absurdities—she sees the kingdoms of Europe, disturbed by wrangling sectaries, or their commerce, population and improvements of every kind cramped and retarded, because the human mind like the body is fettered “and bound fast by the chords of policy and superstition”: She laughs at their folly and shuns their errors: She founds her empire upon the idea of universal toleration: She admits all religions into her bosom; She secures the sacred rights of every individual; and (astonishing absurdity to Europeans!) she sees a thousand discordant opinions live in the strictest harmony ... it will finally raise her to a pitch of greatness and lustre, before which the glory of ancient Greece and Rome shall dwindle to a point, and the splendor of modern Empires fade into obscurity. (Webster cited in Kohn, 1944, 293)

8 Bradford sailed on the “Speedwell” that accompanied the “Mayflower” to Massachusetts on the first expedition to America 1620.

It is during the years following this period that Webster came to realize the necessity of developing a unified, national linguistic norm (cf. Chapter 10 for a definition of norm) for the United States that would be independent from what he considered to be recent English eccentricities and caprices of upper-class London English speakers. It annoyed him to no end that, despite the useless bloodletting during the Revolution, men and women of his social class still followed the trends in pronunciation that were popular at the English court and stage.

His fight against the privileges of those he considered to have the higher social status (but not a higher linguistic register) of London English became an obsession and, as we shall see, his crusade against the English linguistic model came to be at the centre of his life's work conditioning every dimension of his lexicographical efforts until his death in 1843.

In 1783, Webster published his first major work, *Grammatical Institute of the English Language Comprising an Easy, Concise, and Systematic Method of Education, Designed for the Use of English Schools in America* which, as the title suggests, was designed as a spelling guide for children. After receiving a request by Webster on May 24, 1776 (his first letter) to publicly endorse his book, Franklin agrees but asks Webster to bring him a full copy of it (cf. his July 18th letter to Webster).

The same fervent rejection of the monarchy coupled with the desire to improve the education system to better instruct the people is expressed on page 1 of his introduction and could not have failed to attract Franklin's attention and win his approval (with the possible exception of Webster's condemnation of the English Constitution, which Franklin had long defended):

Previously to the late war, America preserved the most unshaken attachment to Great-Britain: The king, *the constitution, the laws, the commerce, the fashions, the books*, and even the sentiments of Englishmen were implicitly supposed to be the best on earth... She now sees a mixture of profound wisdom and consummate folly *in the British constitution*; a ridiculous compound of freedom and tyranny in their laws; and a few struggles of patriotism, overpowered by the corruptions of a wicked administration. She views the vices of that nation with abhorrence, their errors with pity, and their follies with contempt. While the Americans stand astonished at their former delusion⁹ and enjoy the pleasure of a final separation from their insolent sovereigns, it becomes their duty to attend to the arts of peace, and particularly to the interests of literature; to see if there be not some errors to be corrected, some defects to be supplied, and some improvements to be introduced into our systems of education, as well as into those of civil polity. We find Englishmen practicing upon very erroneous maxims in politics and religion; and possibly we shall find, upon careful examination, that their methods of education are equally erroneous and defective. (Webster, 1783, 1)

9 This recalls Franklin's remarks after Braddock's defeat (cf. Chapter 7).

As we shall see, in matters of language, the majority of educated American still clung tenaciously to the English model of speech as defined by the noted orthoepists of their day: Sheridan, Nares, Kenrick and, most of all, Walker. Contrary to the popular image of Webster as an American nationalist, which he indeed was, his insistence was on the maintenance of the older English grammatical, lexical and phonetic models of the 17th and early 18th century and, even going back to the (Anglo-)Saxons. This latter point is noteworthy because it was a vision shared by other founding fathers, most particularly, Thomas Jefferson, a fervent Anglo-Saxonist (as was Franklin but to a lesser degree, cf. Franzen, 1997):

It is but a short time since we have had a grammar of our own tongue, formed upon *the true principles of its Saxon origin* (my italics): And those who have given us the most perfect systems, have confined themselves chiefly to the two last branches of grammar, Analog and Syntax. *In the two first, Orthography and Prosody, that is, in the spelling and pronunciation of words, we have no guide, or none but such as lead into the numerable errors. The want of some standard in schools has occasioned a great variety of dialects in Great-Britain and of course, in America.*¹⁰ *Every country in England, every State in America and almost every town in each State, has some peculiarities in pronunciation which are equally erroneous and disagreeable to its neighbors* (my italics). And how can these distinctions be avoided? The sounds of our letters are more capricious and irregular than those of any alphabet with which we are acquainted. Several of our vowels have four or five different sounds; and the same sounds are often expressed by five, six or seven different characters. The café is much the same with our consonants: And these different sounds have no mark of distinction. How would a child or a foreigner learn a different sound of o in these words, *rove, move, dove*,¹¹ or of oo in *poor; door*? Or that a, ai, ei, and e, have precisely the same sound in these words, *bare, laid, vein, there*? Yet these and fifty other irregularities have passed unnoticed by authors of Spelling Books and Dictionaries. They study the language enough to find the difficulties of it – they tell us that it is impossible to reduce it to order – that it is to be learnt only by the ear – they lament the disorder and dismiss it without a remedy.

The principal part of instructors are illiterate people, and require some early guide to the standard of pronunciation, which is nothing else but the customary pronunciation of the most accurate scholars and literary Gentlemen. Such a

10 Nevertheless, as we saw in Chapter 11, the general consensus of 18th-century British travellers in America was that American English was comparatively more unified and closer to the mesolect. I added however that this could only be the case compared to the remarkably diverse nature of the British “dialects” (basilects/badumes).

11 His statement here contradicts the observations I have made in Part III regarding Franklin, Barlow and Dwight's rhymes of these words, as well as William Barnes. Both Butler and I have interpreted Barnes' and Franklin's pronunciations to have been realized during the 17th- and early 18th-century as [ʌ] in Dorset and Somerset and [ɪ ~ ʏ] in New England. We have seen previously that Webster acknowledges the existence of “New England short o” and gives examples of this regional pronunciation. The borderline between what constituted dialect and standard language was probably in flux in his own mind as is it was in those of others. His pronunciation of *rove, move* and *dove* are obviously close to their contemporary GA values [ou], [u:] and [ʌ], not the much older [ɪ ~ ʏ].

standard, universally used in schools, would in time, demolish those odious distinctions of provincial dialects, which are the objects of reciprocal ridicule in the United States (1). (Webster, 1783, 6)

Webster's goals are expressed in the third part of his *Grammatical Institute*: "to refine and establish our language, to facilitate the acquisition of grammatical knowledge, and diffuse the principles of virtue and patriotism." The following title cannot have failed to please Franklin: *An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking; Calculated to Improve the Minds and Refine the Taste of Youth. And also to Instruct them in the Geography, History, and Politics of the United States, to which are prefixed, Rules in Elocution, and Directions for Expressing the Principal Passions of the Mind*. This vision corresponds well to the objectives that Franklin had outlined his English School in his Philadelphia Academy, founded by him in 1744. As I stressed in Chapter 14, both Webster and Franklin were prescriptivists and Webster's stated goal to "demolish those odious distinctions of provincial dialects, which are the objects of reciprocal ridicule in the United States" was shared by both men.

Webster's insistence on the great variety of dialects not only in England but also in America demonstrates once again that multiple paritary registers of the North American koines were well established and had been for quite some time. In Chapter 12, I proposed that the koineization process had culminated in the foundation of recognizable American varieties by the first quarter of the 18th century.

This initial edition of his *Grammatical Institute* (also known as the blue-backed speller) was a phenomenal success and became one of the best-selling books in American publishing history with around one hundred million copies sold between 1783 and the early 1900s (Dobbs, 2021). The success of this speller is a testimony to the fierce desire of poor illiterate Americans to acquire literacy in a bid to improve their minds and social condition. The book also catapulted Webster to the forefront of the educational scene making him a household name throughout the nation, especially in New England. It is certainly thanks to the initial success of his speller that his name came to the attention of Benjamin Franklin. Recall that it was in 1785 that Franklin finally received a letter that Polly Stevenson had written ten years previously and which had been held up as a result of the war. In this letter she expressed that she had changed her critical opinion on the value of his RMS and encouraged him to use his influence to institute it (more on this in Chapter 30). I am convinced that this may have sparked his decision to reach out to Webster and propose a collaboration.

Webster's vision was clearly expressed and his nationalistic message resonated among the common people of America but, as we shall see, far less among the American elites. Webster signals three urgent needs:

- to resist and expunge American English of *recent and capricious* English innovations that have been initiated by orthoepists, described on several occasions as “coxcombs” by Webster, and which too many Americans were willing to imitate;
- to respect and promote the “true principles of the Saxon origin” of speech of America’s English ancestors, devoid of the Latinate excesses to which he felt Samuel Johnson had fallen victim;
- like Franklin, to eliminate regionalisms in the various states which Webster views as “objects of ridicule,” “odious” and signs of ignorance and illiteracy (cf. Chapter 14).

2.1 Defining an American Standard

Simply put, Webster was arguing in favour of eliminating one form of purism presented by the authorities of pronunciation in England and replacing it with what Webster later refers to as the “natural language,” the “true Saxon” tongue, i.e. his own and that of “New England gentlemen.”

If Webster had read Franklin’s RMS before the 1783 edition was published, he makes no mention of Franklin’s work nor does he speak of any dramatic plans for modifying the spelling system. As his book sales soared, however, his ambitions certainly grew proportionately and it may be at some point between 1783-1786 that he came upon Franklin’s treatise. It appears that it was Webster who made the first move to contact Franklin to ask his advice on how to institute a reform. It is not out of the question that this was done at the instigation of a third party who may have acted as a go-between. Whatever the circumstances, it is very like that Webster had read Franklin’s treatise on the subject by the time he wrote his first letter to Franklin, probably in the spring or early summer of 1786.

In Webster’s mind, given Franklin’s immense international stature, his support in this endeavour could only benefit him. Furthermore, now at the summit of his fame and prestige, Franklin’s support for this endeavour not only offered him a respected scientific endorsement of the highest order but also a political one which, he hoped, would earn him a place as the founding father of American English lexicography, spelling and orthoepy. As we shall see in Chapter 30, however, it is quite evident that he did not understand the scientific nature of Franklin’s reform and this contributed to its ultimate failure.

Although he was already a devout man, Webster’s religiosity grew even more in intensity over time, particularly after he converted to Calvinism in 1808. From that time onward, his faith played an even more important role in his endeavours and he must have believed that Providence had appointed him with the task of defining a national standard of pronunciation for the new American

nation. Despite the enormous obstacles in his path, he steadfastly strived to overcome them one-by-one, year-after-year, until the end of his life in 1843. He never gave in.

2.2 Epistolary Exchanges between Webster and Franklin

Four of Webster's letters to Franklin and three responses to them by Franklin have survived but, unfortunately, they provide little evidence concerning the precise nature of their views on the character of the new standard. After having been informed that Webster's letters to Franklin had been lost, thanks to the Packard Humanities Institute's digital edition of Franklin's papers (sponsored by the American Philosophical Society and Yale University), I have only now found Webster's four letters recently (all unpublished). This wonderful collection provided more insight into what I sense must have been a strained relationship between the two men.

According to Jennifer Dicola Matos¹² (2021), Webster gave a lecture in Philadelphia on February 13, 1786 during which he presented his ideas on the English language at the College of Philadelphia (formerly the Academy of Philadelphia) which Franklin had founded in 1749. It became a college in 1755. Although Matos' account here is very credible, I have not yet found confirmation of this lecture (i.e. no advertisement in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, for instance). It appears that, after Webster's talk, Franklin discussed his own ideas about the distinct need for the modernization of English orthography, perhaps as part of an open public debate. This was an idea that Webster had been toying with himself, but he feared it was an impossible task. Webster clearly saw Franklin's encouragement as an opportunity to expand his own influence on the nature of the English language in America and saw Franklin as a key ally in his endeavour.

Writing from New York, Webster's first letter to Franklin is dated May 24, 1786 (cf. Appendix 4 for all the correspondence between the two men).

Sir.

When I was in Philadelphia, I had the honor of hearing your Excellency's opinion upon the idea of reforming the English Alphabet. I had repeatedly revolved, in my mind, the utility of such a plan and had arranged some ideas upon the subject; but had not ventured to hope for success in an undertaking of this kind. Your Excellency's sentiments upon the subject, backed by the concurring opinion of many respectable Gentlemen, and **particularly of the late Chairman of Congress**, have taught me to believe the Reformation of our Alphabet still practicable. *I know*

¹² Jennifer DiCola Matos is the executive director of the Noah Webster House and the West Hartford Historical Society. This article first appeared in the Winter 2020/2021 issue of *Connecticut Explored*, the magazine and podcast of Connecticut history, and appears here with permission.

that several attempts to effect it in England have proved fruitless; but I conceive they failed through some defect in the plans proposed; or for reasons which do not exist in this country (my italics).¹³

One is left with the impression that the discussion between the two men was extremely brief and rather superficial, perhaps in the form of a public debate after his lecture. Nevertheless, Franklin's words were obviously enough to inspire Webster to embark on his own effort to modernize English orthography. Until that point, Franklin had not read Webster's *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language Comprising an Easy, Concise, and Systematic Method of Education, Designed for the Use of English Schools in America* (1783). Webster then proposed his own plan to improve English orthography, which I would conjecture is the same as in the outline he proposed in his *Dissertations on the English Language* (1789, 394-395, cf. Chapter 30, section 1.4 for a full discussion).

Enclosed is a plan for this purpose of reducing the orthography of the Language to perfect regularity, *with as few new characters and alterations of the old ones, as possible. It is probable that a great number of new and unusual characters would defeat the attempt* (my italics).

From the very beginning, Webster, to his credit, very honestly announced his intentions, namely, that he was against the introduction of "unusual new characters" to the new American alphabet, which is exactly what Franklin and other orthoepists had proposed. This suggests that he had already read or, at least, was aware of the general outlines of Franklin's scheme. Sadly, however, the "plan" to which he refers does not appear to have survived.

I know not whether your Excellency will be able to understand the characters fully; for it is very difficult to convey sounds on paper, and particularly for me who am no penman and cannot form the characters exactly as I wish. But this rough draught will perhaps give a sufficient idea of my plan and it is submitted to your Excellency *for adoption, amendment or rejection*. I am requested to lay the plan before Your Excellency and by a Gentleman whose character in public life, and particularly in the chair of Congress, will give his opinion great weight in this country. Should this or any other plan be adopted, it is desired that Your Excellency would lay it before Congress for their critical consideration.

It appears that Webster conveyed at least some of his "plan" in writing, hence his reference to his poor penmanship and his difficulty in forming the characters, probably the ones he proposed in his *Dissertations* (cf. Chapter 30, section 1.4 for details). He is blatantly asking Franklin to adopt his plan or reject it outright. It is also clear that he is seeking to profit from Franklin's stature, fame and position

¹³ Contrary to what I had believed initially, Webster was aware of the existence of the English orthoepists who had sought a spelling reform, but his knowledge of those reforms, at least at this stage, seems to have been very approximate.

among the high-ranking dignitaries of the new American Republic to advance *his* project. Despite his attempt at even-handedness, it seems clear he had no intention of adopting Franklin's RMS

The advantages of adopting a reformation in their country, whether political or literary will readily occur to an attentive mind, and it would be arrogant [sic] and superfluous for me to state them to one, who is so accurately acquainted with the elements of language and the interests of America as your Excellency. General Washington has expressed the warmest wishes for the success of my undertaking to refine the language, and could he be acquainted with the New Alphabet proposed would undoubtedly commence its advocate. A few distinguished characters might give such weight to an attempt of this magnitude, *as to crush all the opposition that would be made by the enemies of our Independence* (my italics).

Once again, we see the extent to which Webster's letter is eminently political, but also self-serving. It is hard to imagine how, after decades of frequenting the most illustrious men and women of his time, including kings and queens, any allusion to George Washington and the latter's views on language propriety (despite his respect for the man) would have swayed Franklin's opinion on linguistic matters.

The minds of people are in a ferment and consequently disposed to receive improvements, once let the ferment subside and the succeeding lethargy will bar every great and amendment. The favorable reception my Lectures have generally met encourage me to hope that *most of the Americans may be detached from an implicit adherence to the language and the manners of the British nation*. I have the honor to be with the highest respect Your Excellency's most obedient most humble Servant

Noah Webster jun

Webster very openly states his desire to "detach" the English language in America from the innovative London variety spoken in the higher social circles in London. Franklin's response to Webster on June 18, 1786 is short and to the point.

I received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me the 24th past with the scheme enclosed of your reformed alphabet. *I think the reformation not only necessary, but practicable; but have so much to say to you on the subject, that I wish to see and confer with you upon it, as that would save much time in writing; sounds, till such an alphabet is fixed, not being easily explained or discoursed of clearly upon paper.* (my italics) (Franklin to Webster, 18 June, 1786a)

The meeting between Franklin and Webster occurred shortly after Franklin had received a letter in 1785 from Polly Stevenson (delayed for ten years as a consequence of the War of American Independence) in which she encouraged Franklin to launch his RMS in the "Empire of America." With her newfound encouragement for his RMS in mind, Franklin must have been sufficiently

impressed by Webster's enthusiasm and industry to imagine he might convince Webster of the merits and soundness of his RMS, hence his invitation to Webster to come to Philadelphia to discuss the matter with him more fully. Whatever his impressions of Webster's ideas for a reform, Franklin does not show any overt sign of annoyance with Webster's forthright rejection of his proto-phonemic system.

Franklin's remarks indicated in italics are as frustrating as they are tantalizing and one wishes Franklin had taken the time to write out his ideas on the subject as they would have shown exactly to what extent they may have evolved since 1768. From Franklin's remark, "till such an alphabet is fixed, not being easily explained or discoursed of clearly upon paper," we can gather that Franklin still believed it that it could be "fixed," unlike Polly Stevenson and Samuel Johnson many years prior to this, perhaps because the American koines were globally far more unified than the basilectal/badume varieties spoken in Great Britain. In this first June 18 letter to Webster, he adds:

I have formerly considered this matter pretty fully, and contrived some of the means of carrying it into execution, so as gradually to render the information general. *Our ideas are so nearly similar; that I make no doubt of our easily agreeing on the plan; and you may depend on the best support I may be able to give it, as a part of your Institute,* (my italics) of which I wish you would bring with you a complete copy, having as yet seen only a part of it. I shall then be better able to recommend it as you desire. Hoping to have soon the pleasure of seeing you, I do not enlarge, but am with sincere esteem, sir, etc. (Franklin to Webster, 18 June, 1786a) (for complete collection of correspondence between Webster and Franklin cf. Appendix 4)

Here, Franklin is using his rhetorical skills to prepare the groundwork for a "dispute" (Chapter 2, Part I, Volume I) with Webster over the nature of the coming reform. By stressing his having thought the question of this orthographic reform "pretty fully" he appears to be attempting to reassert his authority in matters of language and orthography and bring Webster onboard.

The reference Franklin makes to Webster's *Institute* is in fact to the latter's *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language* proving that he had sent Franklin an extract(s) of it. Franklin's interest in the project is demonstrated by his request for an "entire copy" of it.

With regard to the statement that "our ideas are so nearly similar," one is left to ponder whether Franklin is referring primarily to the technical aspects of Webster's proposal or whether, since the Revolution, he had adopted Webster's point of view regarding the need for a new proto-phonemic model designed specifically for the inhabitants of the new American Republic who, henceforth, would no longer be subjected to the linguistic fashions of London's upper crust.

I have found no evidence for such a change of heart, however. Nevertheless,

as we shall soon see, it is far from certain that he was willing to depart from the scheme he proposed in his RMS which, as we have seen, was globally based on an innovation London English model.

Webster's next letter, written in New Haven, Connecticut, is dated June 23, 1786. It reads as follows:

Sir.

The letter which Your Excellency has done me the honor to address to me at New York, was yesterday recieved at this Place.

I am happy that a plan of reforming our Alphabet is so well recieved [sic] by a Gentleman, who thoroughly understands the subject, and am more and more convinced, from the present sentiments and spirit of the Americans, that a judicious attempt to introduce it needs but the support of a few eminent characters to be carried into effect.

After these flattering words, once again, Webster hammers away at the need for support from "eminent characters" and members of the new Congress. His not so hidden agenda appears to have been for lawmakers to pass a national law imposing his orthographic system on the entire nation. From this perspective, Webster's ambition was similar to Polly Stevenson's proposal in her 1775 letter to Franklin that he use his influence to make his RMS the basis for a modern English language orthography for America.

I feel the necessity of conferring with your Excellency on the subject and would do myself the honor of waiting on you immediately, had I not made arrangements or rather engagements to read Lectures in Boston and Portsmouth this summer. Every circumstances with me renders this the most eligible plan; for the Lectures have their effect in preparing the minds of people for any improvements, and my business will require me to be at Philadelphia in Sept or October. If this would answer your Excellency's wishes, it would be more convenient for me; otherwise I will come to Philad. immediately. I shall be in New Haven about ten days and then propose to proceed to Boston, unless I have further information. I have the honor to be, Your Excellency's much obliged and most obedient Servant.

Franklin's second letter to Webster was written on July 9, 1786 and is a response to Webster's request for a postponement of their meeting. Webster had mentioned giving lectures on the subject of his ideas on the need for an "American national model" and a spelling reform. Just as Webster had dropped George Washington's name, Webster, no doubt, used Franklin's to open doors which may otherwise have been closed. Franklin encouraged him to continue giving his lectures in order to sway the opinion of key American personalities in favour of their plan. Here we have an echo of Franklin's past strategies to influence public opinion. This time, however, he was no longer the editor of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and his ability to play a role through his articles in persuading the American people

of the merits of this project had long passed. The only significant passage in this very short letter reverts to the question of public welfare: "I think with you that the lecturing on the language will be of great use in preparing the minds of people for the improvements proposed." As ever, this was his eternal concern.

Webster's final letter to Franklin was sent from Hartford on October 28th after he had finished his lecture tour in the "eastern states." It is too long and of little significance for our story to cite here (cf. Appendix 4). Suffice it to say that he complains of his dire financial situation, the possibility of obtaining a teaching post in Philadelphia. In an obvious attempt to curry Franklin's favour, he emphasizes his hardworking frugal nature and he ends his letter by asking Franklin's assistance in advancing his spelling reform project. Never once does he allude to adopting Franklin's scheme.

It was probably late in November or December that Webster and Franklin finally met at the latter's home in Philadelphia at which time they discussed their scheme for a spelling reform, the fruit of their exchanges which Webster later presented in his *Dissertations on the English Language* (1789) (cf. Chapter 30). Based on the correspondence between the two men, Webster had made it clear from the outset that he wanted "as few new characters and alterations of the old ones, as possible." He repeats the same position in this book (cf. Chapter 30). Franklin must have been slightly annoyed by this blatant, but honest, rejection of his scheme, compounded by his request for political help in advancing his own project. After this meeting, we know that Franklin had given Webster not only all his notes about his RMS (including Sir Thomas Smith and probably other orthoepists) but also the six lead characters he had cast at Watts' Printing House in London in 1768 (cf. Chapters 13 and 25). This suggests to me that he still hoped to change Webster's views on this point. Considering that Webster's system turned out to be so different, it is also entirely possible that he never fully understood the logic of Franklin's phonological system.

I have come to the conclusion that, while he may have genuinely admired Franklin for all he had achieved, Webster was simply using Franklin's name and authority to promote his own ambitions. Franklin was certainly too wise not to have seen through this tactic.

2.3 A Linguistic Model for Americans: An Undeclared Disagreement

In Webster's October 28th letter to Franklin, he spoke of the possibility of obtaining a teaching post in "Oratory" at the "University," presumably at the University of Pennsylvania which Franklin had founded many years before (cf. Philadelphia Academy).

Possibly a subscription may be obtained for a repetition of my Lectures in Philada.

I have thought of instituting an oratorical academy in that City or New York or to open public reading after the plan of Mr. Sheridan in London. I was asked when in Philada by President Ewing, whether I would accept the professorship of Oratory in the University. This I could not do then and I do not know whether I should now be willing. I know not the emoluments of it nor indeed the business. If it requires the attention of a man, like a school, as I suspect from a little acquaintance with Mr. Gamble the late professor, I should not, I could not take it. If the consists in reading Lectures at stated times or in hearing the lessons of a class, as the instructors practise in New Haven or Cambridge, it is probable I should be glad of the place.

Webster did move to Philadelphia the following year and it is possible that it was at this time that he finally met with Franklin at his home, not in the fall of the preceding year. Until I discovered this fact, I found it strange that there was no correspondence between the two men between October 1786 and May 1789.

Based on their common interests, one would have imagined that Franklin and Webster would have met frequently to discuss their ideas and plans, but I have found no evidence from any historian specializing on Franklin's or Webster's lives that either man sought to see each other. After two years in Philadelphia, Webster finally decided to move back to Hartford, Connecticut, his hometown (like Joel Barlow's). It is upon his arrival in Hartford that he posted a letter to Franklin dated May 20, 1789. Next to "Hartford" he adds in parenthesis, "where I shall reside" which clearly indicates that, before leaving Philadelphia, he had not passed by his home to pay his respects.

In this last letter to Franklin, Webster first asks Franklin if he would mind meeting a young Reverend, Abiel Holmes, a native of Georgia, a very capable young man who was in a situation which might be "extensively useful" to Franklin. Following this, he announces the publication of his *Dissertations on the English Language*. He explains that he will have his bookseller deliver his book to Franklin's home.

Franklin did not respond to Webster until December 26, 1789, presumably during the time it took him to read the book. This was only four months before his death. In his opening lines, Franklin states that he had received a copy of Webster's *Dissertations* but, given that no letter was enclosed to indicate by whom the book had been sent, he could only assume it was sent by Webster. The tone is one of mild irritation and a polite rebuke for such an impropriety. Had Franklin forgotten that Webster had already sent him a letter on May 20th informing him that he would be receiving the book? Did he ever receive the letter or was this a mere oversight on Webster's part.

I cannot help but sense that some undeclared friction had arisen between the two men during the course of their exchanges. Had the prickly Webster taken offence at some of Franklin's remarks or opinions? Like most American intellectuals of the time, Franklin's desire to respect London English linguistic custom as a model for all cultivated gentlemen (even if he had been somewhat

unsuccessful in this endeavour himself, Chapter 28) and his continued criticism of American "barbarisms" and dialectal pronunciations may have annoyed Webster.

Yet, we have seen that both Webster and Franklin abhorred the same "dialectalisms," although Webster stressed with pride in his *Dissertations* that many of these older forms could be traced back to Shakespeare and Chaucer (Ellis' references as well, 1869). Furthermore, with reference to Webster's "Spelling book," Franklin takes the liberty of criticizing the shoddy work of Webster's printer in a rather blunt way just before signing off on his letter.

After these general observations, permit me to make one that I imagine may regard your interest. It is that your Spelling Book is miserably printed here, so as in many places to be scarcely legible, and on wretched paper. If this is not attended to, and the new one lately advertised as coming out should be preferable in these respects, it may hurt the future sale of yours.

Could this be interpreted to be a slap on Webster's wrist? There is no sign that Webster ever wrote a letter of apology or even a polite response to Franklin December 26th letter. Had word gotten back to him that Franklin's health was declining (cf. Rev. Ezra Stiles, Chapter 30) or, now that the public had the full impression that Webster was Franklin's protégé with respect to his spelling reform, did he simply feel he had achieved his goal?

Indeed, if Franklin selected Noah Webster to be his successor in promoting a new phonologically-based orthography for the people of the American Republic, it was not necessarily because Franklin was particularly fond of Webster. In fact, he most likely considered Webster in the same vein many of his contemporaries did, that is, a rather swell-headed, opinionated, pompous elitist. Ellis described him in a kinder light, a "worthy pedant" (1869, 1065). In typical fashion, Franklin most likely overlooked the disagreeable aspects of his personality with the belief that Webster was working for the greater good, in this case, facilitating the task of educating large segments of the population which had the least possibility to acquire a formal education, and even if the project adopted was not his own.

Franklin then thanks Webster for having sent his *Dissertations* to him and, in particular, for having dedicated the book to him. He then states that he considers it to be an excellent work.

I cannot but applaud your zeal for preserving the purity of our language [my italics], both in its expressions and pronunciation, and in correcting the popular errors several of our States are continually falling into with respect to both (my italics). (Franklin, 1789)

On the contrary, he only refers to the declining standard of English in "some of our States."

In his last letter, Franklin does not make the slightest remark regarding

Webster's fierce anti-British posture nor to the evolving London English standard of pronunciation which many Americans, including Franklin, were attempting to uphold. On the contrary, "*correcting the popular errors of our States*" and "*American barbarisms*" is the focus of his attention in this letter (cf. Chapter 30). Was this an attempt to get under Webster's skin? Not necessarily, once again, both men judged dialecticisms such as *keow* for "cow" (a pronunciation advocated by Walker, 1791), *diss* for "this," *painter* for "panther," etc. to be "ridiculous" (cf. *Poor Richard's Almanack*, 1739, Chapter 14). Franklin's concern was for the popular neologisms and corrupt regionalisms such as these stemming from the paritary colonial koines (cf. Chapters 11 and 12).

Franklin expresses the view that American English had declined since his youth in Boston (1706-1723). Recall that Looby (1984) took this literally and assumed that American colonists originally spoke a more unified and standard form of English. Webster dated the beginning of the decline of the "English golden age of language and literature" to the beginning of King George II's reign in 1727. Interestingly, I pointed out that this fits in quite nicely with Mazarin's beginning date for his Type D variety of English (1730-1800). Paradoxically, perhaps, Mazarin classified Webster's accent as belonging to this evolved variety. So much for his linguistic "purity."

In the following passage, Franklin gives the example of the corrupt use of "employ" in New England, with the meaning of "improve":

When I left New England, in the year 1723, this word had never been used among us, as far as I know, but in the sense of ameliorated or made better, except once in a very old book of Dr. Mather's, entitled *Remarkable Providences*. But when I returned to Boston, in 1733, I found this change had obtained favor, and was then become common, for I met with it often in perusing the newspapers, where it frequently made an appearance [168] rather ridiculous... This use of the word "improved" is peculiar to New England, and not to be met with among any other speakers of English, either on this or the other side of the water. (Ibid.)

Indeed, Franklin's negative sentiments about American deviations from the standard English of England do not appear to have changed since David Hume's disparaging comments about Franklin's own lexical "barbarisms" (cf. Franklin's linguistic insecurity, Chapters 14, 25). Hume had rebuked Franklin for his use of words such as "to pejorate," "to colonize" and "unshakable" which the former perceived to be "Americanisms" and hence substandard English (cf. Ellis' remark on this below). In his response to Hume (September 27, 1760, cf. Chapter 14), Franklin acknowledged these American examples as "bad English" and, somewhat subserviently, essentially apologized to Hume stating that "we shall always in America make the best English of this Island our standard, and I believe it will be so" (Franklin to David Hume, 27 September, 1760). However, Franklin says nothing to Hume about pronunciation. Indeed, Hume was a Scot

and probably spoke a form of modified English spoken by Scottish intellectuals of the time, a variety influenced by the lawyers and clergy (just as in pre-Revolutionary France, Chapter 11; cf. also Beal, 1999).

Franklin's letter to Hume was written only eight years before Franklin drafted his RMS and, once again, I have not found the slightest shred of evidence demonstrating he had changed his mind about his heteronymous view of English, even after the humiliations he had suffered at the hands of these London elites in 1774 and 1775 or as a result of the bloody War of Independence. His bitterness and anger were directed against what he viewed as an autocratic, oppressive system of government. We shall see that most Americans still saw themselves as "British" and, in Franklin's case, ethnically, linguistically and culturally "English" and is reflected sociolinguistically (cf. Chapter 6, Part I, Volume I).

More specifically, in this last letter to Webster, Franklin goes on to condemn the use of substantives as verbs, another supposed trait of American English, and he gives three examples: *to notice*, *to advocate* and *to progress*, all of which he condemns. He then adds the following advice to Webster: "If you should happen to be of my opinion with respect to these innovations, you will use your authority in reprobating them" (Franklin to Webster, December 26, 1789).

Here we clearly see that Franklin, only months before his death, still clings to a more conservative view of English as it was once spoken in New England and in England. Nevertheless, Alexander Ellis (1869, 1064) makes the following common-sense remark regarding Franklin's observations:

The words are still all in use in America; and "to notice," "to advocate," and "opposed" are common in England, where even "to progress" is heard. The point of interest is that in the use as well as in the pronunciation of words, *elderly people are being continually offended by innovations which they look upon as deteriorations, but which constantly prevail in spite of such denunciations* (my italics). (Ellis, 1869, 1064)

So, we see that, in this case, the so-called "Americanisms" referred to by Franklin as examples of linguistic decay were also perfectly "English" innovations as well, and thus of common provenance.

2.4 American Democracy, Americanisms and English Disdain

From the time of American independence, these kinds of so-called "Americanisms," "vulgarisms" or "barbarisms" were condemned with increasing vehemence by the English, a tendency which survives to the present day, not only in England but also in academic circles on the European mainland. In the popular mind, American English is often understood to be synonymous with "slang." Nevertheless, behind the English criticisms of the early 19th century, one senses a vengeful undercurrent in these attacks, a thinly veiled political and social condemnation of the Americans' decision to break with the motherland.

In this same vein, Allan Walker Read cites the exasperated reviewer for the *European Magazine* who attacks Thomas Jefferson's use of the word "belittle" which appears in the latter's *Notes on Virginia*:

Belittle! What an expression! It may be an elegant one in Virginia, and even perfectly intelligible; but for our part, all we can do is, to guess at its meaning. For shame, Mr. Jefferson! Why, after trampling the honour of our country ... O spare us, we beseech you, our mother-tongue. (Read, 1933, in Dillard, 1980, 27)

Other American "barbarisms" of the time were: "to utilize," "to spade" (the soil), "to breeze," "to bottom," "to oppose," "to locate," "to appreciate," "to deputize," "to raise" and "to compromit." Adjectives such as "lengthy," "millennial," "crass," "outlandish" were all condemned by English gentlemen as "barbaric." Ironically, just as the examples cited by Alexander Ellis (and condemned by Franklin as "Americanisms") with the exception of "compromit" (which Merriam-Webster states is "obsolete"), all are perfectly intelligible in both standard American and British English today, demonstrating that what were once "Americanisms" have now been perfectly integrated into the Modern English standard.

One gets a clearer sense of this English anger in a letter written in 1812 by poet laureate Robert Southey. In the context of a second bloody war with America, he makes the following remark in a letter published in the *Quarterly Review* making an association between social levelling currently under way in American society and the general boorish behaviour which he considered to be characteristically "American." How could citizens of such a nation speak correct English?

[The Americans] have become independent (by our fault, most assuredly) a full century before they were of age. See what it is to have a nation to take its place among civilized states before it has either gentlemen or scholars! They have in the course of twenty years acquired a distinct national character for low and lying knavery; and so well do they deserve it that no man ever had dealings with them without having proofs of its truth. (Quoted in Eaton, 2012, 69).

Once again, such blatant condescension and contempt for the Americans recalls the low opinions formerly expressed for the American colonials by British Generals Braddock, Forbes and Wolfe during the French and Indian Wars (cf. Chapters 6-9, Volume I). These views were still anchored in past visions of high-born Englishmen speaking "polite" London English versus low-born people speaking "vulgar" English, another echo of the Great Chain of Being (cf. Ferguson, 1959, cf. Robert of Gloucester's "heie & lowe men"). As we saw in Chapter 1, but also in Chapters 10-12, 14 of Part II, these concepts have direct sociolinguistic counterparts (UMC, MMC, LMC, UWC, LWC, cf. Chapter 10), modes of speech that identify us along points of a rigidly vertical Great Chain of Being.

Behind such criticisms, however, one also senses wounded English pride. First,

it was unthinkable for the English aristocratic class, and those seeking to become a part of it, to accept the idea that the Americans, who were often presented by the Tories as lower-class rabble or as, at best, vulgar *nouveaux riches*, should have had the audacity to define linguistic standards of English for the English. A case in point is Samuel Johnson's rejection of Sheridan's pronouncing dictionary because he had "the disadvantage of being an Irishman!" (cited in Bowen, 1905, 545).

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the same class of English people were outraged that the Americans should have betrayed their king, to whom the Americans, including Franklin, had publicly sworn allegiance. This violation of the strict codes of honour of the time was of the vilest kind. Furthermore, by seceding from the motherland, they had upset the natural order and social stability that many still viewed as divinely determined. This was taken literally by thousands of American Loyalists, many of whom moved north and founded English Canada.

In conclusion to this section, as intimated above, I have found no proof that Franklin's heteronomous attitudes towards English pronunciation had waned by the time of his meeting with Webster. Nevertheless, in a letter written in May 1788, Franklin speaks, in a moment of evident nostalgia, of his desire to return home to his native Boston one last time. At his great age he knew it was now impossible. He comments on the pleasure he had on occasion to meet people from his old hometown saying how much he enjoyed their "turns of phrase" and their Boston "accent." Sadly, he gives no examples of what characterized it.

I should find very few indeed of my old friends living, it being now sixty-five years since I left it to settle here; — all this considered, I say, it seems probable, though not certain, that I shall hardly again visit that beloved place. But I enjoy the company and conversation of its inhabitants, when any of them are so good as to visit me; for, besides their general good-sense, which I value, *the Boston manner, turn of phrase, and even tone of voice, and accent in pronunciation*, all please, and seem to refresh and revive me. (Franklin to John Lathrop, May 31, 1788)

30. Franklin and Webster, the Fathers of American Orthography

Introduction

The final chapter of Part V, and of this book, focuses on Franklin's influence on Webster's orthographic reform. The first section deals Franklin's contributions to Webster's *Dissertations on the English Language* where his impact appears to have been the most evident. The second section deals with Webster's outright rejection of Franklin's scientific approach to reform and his attempts to implement his own scheme. Some of the technical difficulties Webster encountered are considered here. Section three concentrates on attempts by linguistically conservative Americans to resist Webster's nationalistic project and their continued adherence to the London-English model, a movement that was very much alive among many American intellectuals throughout the 19th century and into the early 20th century.

I argue that it is this general, American-based resistance that ultimately resulted in the watering down of Webster's (and Franklin's) dream of a radically new orthographic system for the United States. Ironically, the undermining of his orthographic system was accomplished by anglophile members of Webster's own family and associates.

The fourth section presents examples of American loyalty to the English model of pronunciation that continued until the first quarter of the 20th century, a position Franklin may very well have supported.

1. Franklin and Webster

1.1 Webster's *Dissertations on the English Language*, 1789

"Webster" is now a household name in the United States but his efforts to establish a uniquely American model of English pronunciation and vocabulary, as well as its codification in the form of a national American dictionary, took nearly a century to achieve. Franklin's important role in encouraging Noah Webster to pursue the spelling reform he proposed in his RMS (1768/1779) has largely gone unnoticed by the scientific community and yet, as we saw in the second half of the

last chapter, the present dissimilarities between the British and American spelling systems are, directly and indirectly, a vital part of Franklin's linguistic legacy.

Despite the questions I evoked in Chapter 29 regarding the possible disagreements about the nature of the future model of American pronunciation, Webster forthrightly expressed his indebtedness to Franklin in his *Dissertations on the English Language: With Notes, Historical and Critical, to Which is Added, by Way of Appendix, an Essay on a Reformed Mode of Spelling, with Dr. Franklin's Arguments on That Subject* (published in Boston, May 1789).

Compared to his 1783 *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language* and successive editions of it, his *Dissertations* is far more radical in tone as well as in terms of his method of transcription, which turned out to be very different from Franklin's. Perhaps in an attempt to gain the support of the American people, most of whom venerated Franklin at this time, Webster praised Franklin's character and contributions to the nation in his preface and dedicated his book to him.

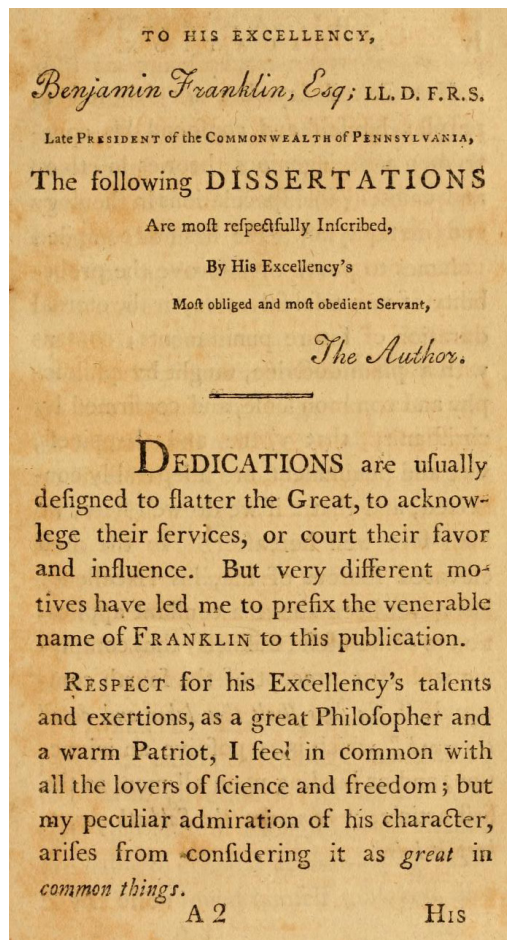


Fig. 30.1 Dedication of Webster's *Dissertation* to Benjamin Franklin (Webster, 1789), public domain, <https://archive.org/details/dissertationsone00webs/page/n5/mode/2up>

This indefatigable gentleman, amidst all his other employments, public and private, has compiled a Dictionary on his scheme of a Reform, and procured types to be cast for printing it. He thinks himself too old to pursue the plan; *but has honored me with the offer of the manuscript and types, and expressed a strong desire that I should undertake the task* (my italics). Whether this project, so deeply interesting to this country, will ever be effected; or whether it will be defeated by indolence and prejudice, remains for my countrymen to determine. (Webster, 1789, 406)

By mentioning that Franklin had provided him with his “manuscript and types,” Webster was essentially announcing to the American public that Franklin had appointed him as his successor to institute his orthographic reform. The political and academic impact of this message was enormous. The underlying message was that Franklin himself had realized that his project would never be applied in Great Britain or in any of its colonies, and that only in the United States could it be implemented. Webster gives full credit to Franklin for his initiative in launching a spelling reform. He writes the following, essentially repeating what he wrote in his first letter to Franklin in May of 1786 (cf. Chapter 29 and Appendix 4):

I once believed that a reformation of our orthography would be unnecessary and impracticable. This opinion was hasty; being the result of a slight examination of the subject. I now believe with Dr. Franklin that such a reformation is practicable and highly necessary. (Webster, 1789, xi)

Franklin’s presence in the entire discussion is constant and his nuggets of wisdom advocating a spelling reform punctuate the text.

This remark of the Doctor is very just and obvious. “A countryman writes *aker* or *akur* for ‘acre’; yet the countryman is right, as the word ought to be spelt; and we laugh at him only because we are accustomed to be wrong.” (Webster, 1789, 408)

Elsewhere, he comments that:

I once heard Dr. Franklin remark, “that those people spell best, who do not know how to spell”; that is, they spell as their ears dictate, without being guided by rules, and thus fall into a regular orthography. (Webster, 1789, 396)

In a letter to his sister Jane Mecom in 1786, Franklin repeats this the same point. “You need not be concern’d in writing to me about your bad Spelling: for in my Opinion as our alphabet now stands, the bad Spelling, or what is call’d so, is generally the best, as conforming to the Sound of the Letters and of Words” (Franklin to Jane Mecom, July 4, 1786b). We reviewed these and other of Franklin’s arguments in favour of a reform in the context of Franklin’s RMS (cf. Chapter 25) but also in Chapter 13 when we compared his motivations with those of his predecessors, such as Sir Thomas Smith and especially John Hart.

It is obvious that observations and references such as these in the last chapter of his *Dissertations* are the fruit of his face-to-face discussions with Franklin and,

presumably, Franklin's notes which, as Webster states, Franklin had offered him. In the popular mind, Webster was now considered one of the leading authorities in matters of language propriety in America and, for that reason, he has been described as the father of American orthography. Nevertheless, Franklin's role in this process is rarely if ever acknowledged.

1.2 Webster's *Dissertations* and American Linguistic Nationalism

Some scholars have argued that Webster's reforms were far more political and ideological than they were linguistic. While there is truth to this, the issues go far deeper culturally, socially and, inevitably, sociolinguistically than we might imagine. Webster's fierce nationalism translates his visceral detestation of the English upper classes at a time when the effects of authoritarian British rule and the bloodshed during the recent war for independence were very fresh in people's minds. This political and emotional dimension is blatantly apparent throughout his *Dissertations* when he essentially makes a linguistic declaration of independence from Great Britain. Unfortunately for Webster, linguistic loyalists were numerous among the educated class of Americans.

As an independent nation, our honor requires us to have a system of our own, in language as well as government. Great Britain, whose children we are, and whose language we speak, should no longer be our standard; for the taste of her writers is already corrupted, and her language on the decline. But if it were not so, she is at too great a distance to be our model, and to instruct us in the principles of our own tongue. (1789, 20)

His patent dislike for London high society lies at the heart of his decision to codify the pronunciation of English in a uniquely American manner. However, we have already stressed that his goal was not to invent a new "American" model per se but rather to preserve the conservative English or original "Saxon" model that he believed had been better preserved in New England than in London. He simply could not abide by the idea that a small body of high-ranking individuals close to the English court should impose their pronunciation, not only on the common people of Great Britain, but also on the people of America who were so far removed from London. Note also his admission that Americans were the "children" of "Great Britain" and that they had inherited the language of Great Britain, "whose language we speak."

The difference between Webster and Franklin on this point is that Webster had never been to England at this time whereas Franklin not only had an English father and grandparents, but he had also resided in London for fifteen years, socializing and interacting with some of the most prominent leaders of the Empire, not to mention Britain's most brilliant scientists, philosophers and thinkers. Regardless of whether he dealt with them as friends or opponents,

many of these would have spoken a variety of English that was characterized by an increasingly normalized grammar, morphology and lexicon, but not necessarily by a common accent. We have seen that Mazarin's rising Type D pronunciation (1730-1800) corresponds by and large to the rising London standard of pronunciation advocated by Sheridan (1761), Kenrick (1773), Nares (1784) and, ultimately Walker (1791). Interestingly, Mazarin classes Webster in this category of Type D speaker. It is not certain he would have appreciated being classified among such men, for reasons we shall soon see. The results of Chapters 25 through 28 confirm that, although numerous traits of his New England accent escape his attention and surface in his RMS transcriptions, by and large, the model conforms on most points to London English of the 1760s. In all probability, in Franklin's mind, the accent he judged to be most typical and appropriate as a standard was Polly Stevenson's Kensington pronunciation.

Webster's underlying objective was to break with what he considered the Americans' dependence on what he considered to be the ever-shifting, innovative modes of speech of the aristocratic and educated ruling class of London, and to defend what he deemed to be the more conservative, historically correct English pronunciation of England. This view betrays his lack of awareness of the numerous basilectal varieties in England at the time. This naivety was probably due to the relative homogeneity of the American koines of the time and that we discussed in Chapter 12.

Webster's concept of language also appears to have been influenced by the German romantic tradition of the period regarding the genius of the "Volk."¹ Krapp (1925, 10) describes Webster's vision of the American people in the following terms.

The American people, as [Webster] viewed them, were a race of simple folk... It was the speech of this folk that Webster would make the basis for his new American English, especially the speech of the New England colonies as the region in which education and literary culture were most highly developed.

In his *Dissertations* he asks the following question which further reinforces this interpretation:

If a standard therefore cannot be fixed on local and variable custom, on what must it be fixed? If the most eminent speakers are not to direct our practice, where must we look for a guide? The answer is extremely easy; the rules of the language

1 Deborah Holmes (2022, n.p.) expresses this idea in terms of "Genie": "Taken up by the poets and linguists of Romanticism, this idea developed into an ultimately tautological justification for German nationalism and, eventually, political unity. True genius, so the argument goes, stems from and resides in the people or 'Volk', who are the source of originary vigour and potential; if art or literature is to have value, it must be an expression of the 'Volk.'" For romanticists, the same idea extended to language, the original "genius" of the proto-language being best preserved among the people.

itself and the general practice of the nation, constitute propriety in speaking. If we examine the structure of any language, we shall find a certain principle of analogy running through the whole. (Webster, 1789, 27)

Webster is essentially saying that, behind the variation inherent to any language, there are underlying constants in phonology, morphology and syntax. These are functions which, based on analogical principles, permit the creation of underlying linguistic rules. It is on this principle that the standard must be created, not through the dictates of a minority.

Contrary to what I had initially imagined, it is not only for nationalistic reasons that Webster launched his spelling reform, but also out of his respect for the speech of his English ancestors. Inherent to the “American” model that Webster advocated was a form of conservative English that he firmly believed reflected a variety of the language that had formerly been spoken in England during its “golden age.” He was convinced that this purer English speech was best preserved in New England and, more specifically, as it had been spoken prior to 1727 (cf. *Dissertations*, 1789). That high-born Englishmen should have the audacity not only to change that model (Type C1/C2 variety) but also to define what was “polite” or “vulgar” speech was anathema to him:

But an attempt to fix a standard on the practice of any particular class of people is highly absurd. As a friend of mine once observed, it is like fixing a light house on a floating island. It is an attempt to fix that which is in itself variable at least it must be variable so long as it is supposed that a local practice has no standard but a local practice, that is, no standard but itself. (Webster, 1789, 25)

Webster then makes a point with which many modern sociolinguistics would probably agree.

While all men are upon a footing and no singularities are accounted vulgar or ridiculous, every man enjoys perfect liberty. But when a particular set of men, in exalted stations, undertake to say, “we are the standards of propriety and elegance, and if all men do not conform to our practice, they shall be accounted vulgar and ignorant,” they take a very great liberty with the rules of the language and the rights of civility. (Webster, 1789, 25-26)

Webster very correctly stresses that “fixing a standard” is difficult because of the inherent variation in language. In the following passage, Webster rejects the idea of an English standard based on the English court and stage. In writing this, however, Webster is brushing aside several hundred years of orthoepistic tradition going back to Smith and Hart. Worst of all, he is also neglecting his own elitism in denouncing varieties of paritary non-standard American speech that both he and Franklin consider to be “ridiculous.”

It is an attempt to fix that which is in itself variable; at least it must be variable so long as it is supposed that a local practice has no standard but a local practice; that

is, no standard but itself. While this doctrine is believed, it will be impossible for a nation to follow as fast as the standard changes – for if the gentlemen at court constitute a standard, they are above it themselves, and their practice must shift with their passions and their whims. (Webster, 1789, 26)-

He complains that “in many parts of America, people at present attempt to copy the English phrases and pronunciation – an attempt that is favoured by their habits, their prepossessions and the intercourse between the two countries.” Franklin was certainly one of these speakers and, as I have already stated, one wonders to what degree the two men may have discussed their differences on this matter when they met in the fall of 1786. Webster believed that it was this tendency to imitate the English model that had led to a “multitude of changes” which were characteristic of the speech of the “leading classes” of Americans. Franklin was certainly one of those Americans who sought to make “the standard of this island” his own.

Webster complains that imitating the English elites would prohibit the social and political union of the American Republic which he, like Franklin, hoped would erase the social barriers separating the social classes. In this sense, their views conformed with those of Abbé Grégoire in post-Revolutionary France who militated in favour of the unification of the French language as a means to erase class distinctions and found a unified nation of republican citizens: *liberté, égalité, fraternité*.

These changes make a difference between the language of the higher and common ranks; and indeed between the same ranks in different states; as the rage for copying the English, does not prevail equally in every part of North America. (Webster, 1789, 24)

As was seen in Part III, Webster’s statement here demonstrates once again that there were indeed clearly identifiable disparitary and paritary registers of American English koinés. The regional differences among these during the 18th century appears to bolster the hypothesis of the founder generation principle and the koineization process outlined in Part II.

In terms of pronunciation, the disparitary variety of English that Webster attacked as being pedantic and elitist was fundamentally the one that Franklin had considered an appropriate model for the people of the British Empire. Webster’s greatest challenge was in convincing the majority of American intellectuals that his views on language were well-founded. As we shall see, most of these, like Franklin, supported the idea of a London English standard.

Webster continues by saying that the elites, “who form only a minority of the British population but feel free to set the standards for everyone is arrogant and unfair.” Here, once again, he takes a swipe at “the Authors,” i.e. Sheridan and Walker.

But besides the reasons already assigned to prove this imitation absurd, there is a difficulty attending it, which will defeat the end proposed by its advocates; which is, that the English themselves have no standard of pronunciation, nor can they ever have one on the plan they propose. The Authors, who have attempted to give us a standard, *make the practice of the court and stage in London the sole criterion of propriety in speaking* (my italics). An attempt to establish a standard on this foundation is both unjust and idle. It is unjust, because it is abridging the nation of its rights: The general practice of a nation is the rule of propriety, and this practice should at least be consulted in so important a matter, as that of making laws for speaking. (Webster, 1789, 24)

Interestingly, Webster's reference to the "general practice of the nation" is the key here. He believed the model should be based on the usage and pronunciation of the majority of speakers. In his mind, it was they who preserved the original essence and genius of their Anglo-Saxon ancestors.² This is the underlying message conveyed in his *Dissertations*. A closer reading of his ideas, however, shows that it is only the English spoken by the educated majority that should serve as a model for the nation and, more specifically, that of New England gentlemen.

Something of Webster's broader, less stringent vision of language propriety has survived in America. This can be seen in the fact that, as opposed to RP, which Trudgill (1974, 3) has claimed is spoken naturally by only 3% of the British population, both Wells (2005, xiv) and Roach (2012, xii) define what is now called "General American" as the accent shared by the majority of all Americans. I would simply add that, historically speaking, I view this to be the result of the koineization process outlined in Chapter 12, which resulted in the comparatively unified and mesolectal nature of both North American English (see also Québécois French).

1.3 New England English: An Echo of Older English Pronunciation?

Much of Webster's effort in his *Dissertations* concentrates on demonstrating how older English lexical and morphological forms used by early writers such as Chaucer and Shakespeare had survived in 18th-century American English and he stressed the degree to which the common American farmer used mainly Saxon vocabulary. He uses the term "Saxon" seventy-three times in his book advancing the idea that New England English had preserved its Saxon roots. Since 90% of

2 Thomas Jefferson, for one, believed that Old English should be one of the two major subjects studied at his newly founded University of Virginia alongside the Bible. Learning Old English, he believed, put students in direct touch with the language and, indirectly, with the primitive democratic institutions that characterised Anglo-Saxon society and Germanic societies more generally as described in Tacitus' 1st-century *Germania*.

inhabitants at the time were farmers, Webster felt that their English should be the foundation for the new American norm. Ironically, throughout his book, he also condemns the non-standard paritary registers of American English. His desire to highlight the Old English origins of American vernacular English is anchored, of course, in the Anglo-Saxonist ideology which had been such a powerful force in the construction of English identity since the 17th century.

Believing, with the author of “Diversions of Purley,” that the peculiar structure of our language is Saxon, and that its principles can be discovered only in its Teutonic original, it has been my business, as far as the materials in my possession would permit, to compare the English with the other branches of the same stock, particularly the German and the Danish. (Webster, 1789, 38)

Anglo-Saxonism was often intertwined and confused with Protestant dogma and remained an integral part of both American and English culture throughout the 19th century (MacDougal, 1982; Griffin, 2000; German, 1996, 2000b; Franzen, 1997) and, arguably, until the present day. The concept of Manifest Destiny is one of its most evident expressions.

Language is the effect of necessity, and when a nation has a language which is competent to all their purposes of communicating ideas, they will not embrace new words and phrases. This is the reason why the yeomanry of the English nation have never adopted the improvements of the English tongue. The Saxon was competent to most of the purposes of an agricultural people; and the class of men who have not advanced beyond that state which in fact makes the body of the nation, at least in America, seldom use any words except those of Saxon original. (Webster, 1789, 57-58)

In many respects, this language is premonitory of the kinds of arguments presented by William Barnes a few decades later, who complained about the “mongrel” nature of the Modern English standard (i.e. “mongrel” referring to the Latinate borrowings, cf. Gachelin, 1981).

Many 21st-century observers would certainly consider Webster’s constant reference to the Saxon origins of the New Englanders to be inherently “racist” or at best “ethnocentric.” Be that as it may, this emphasis on Anglo-Saxon origins partially explains the desire of so many Americans to adhere to the linguistic and cultural ties that bound them to Great Britain. Among many New Englanders, this feeling of ethnic fraternity with the English did not die easily. In 1894, for instance, the editor of the Springfield town records in Massachusetts writes the following:

Two and a half centuries ago Springfield did not promise much to our ancestors beyond the simplest living, and those who came here must have had their reward in the feeling of independence of the conditions which had beset them in their English homes. Freedom of thought and purpose were sufficient in themselves to make the plainest life attractive. Notwithstanding the long lapse of time since

the aboriginal inhabitants of this land passed the title to the soil to the people of Anglo-Saxon blood, the struggles and hardships of the pioneers are not forgotten, and each year there is an increased interest in what our ancestors accomplished. (Burt, 1894, 10)

Webster highlights numerous conservative linguistic features that still characterized the speech of New Englanders in his day and which he claimed could be traced back to Chaucer and Shakespeare's times, for instance, grammatical locutions such as "of a Monday" rather than "on a Monday" (he qualifies the latter as "English" and a "mistake");³ archaic morphological forms such as "mought" for "might," "shet" for "shut," "holp" as the past tense of "help," etc. All of the latter were attested in southern US English until recently.⁴

I have already alluded to the fact that there is a striking contradiction here. Of course, all of these examples are little jewels for modern-day dialectologists and diachronic linguists. Paradoxically, however, many of the vernacular "Saxon" characteristics he highlights here were decried by both him and Franklin who advocated that these should be expunged from the English language for the sake of linguistic unity and because of they were quite simply "ridiculous," an adjective used by both men to describe such features. One of the linguistically conservative features of this kind encountered in the vernacular was and still is the use of irregular verb forms, many of which have their source in Early Modern English and, ultimately, in Middle English. Recall how this was roundly mocked by Franklin in his *Poor Richard's Almanack*, December 1739 (cf. Chapter 14).

In passing, it should be noted that it was this aspect of Franklin's RMS and Webster's phonetic descriptions and transcriptions of American English in his *Dissertations* that piqued the interest of Alexander Ellis (1869). He is perhaps the first English scholar to have taken Webster's claims seriously about the archaic nature of American English pronunciation and grammar, not because of any real interest in American English *per se*, but rather because he saw their work as revealing older lost pronunciations that were once heard in England.

Noah Webster's English Dictionary (i.e. American Dictionary of the English Language, 1841 edition) has so recently become popular in England that we can scarcely look upon him as belonging to the 18th century. But having been born in Connecticut in 1758, *his associations with English pronunciation in America are referable to a period of English pronunciation in England belonging quite to the beginning of the 18th, if not even to the latter half of the 17th century* (my italics). The recent editions of the Dictionary all shew a "revised" pronunciation, so that the historical character of the work in this respect is destroyed. The following

3 I have heard this used by Chesapeake Bay fisherman ("of a night").

4 See Gaelle Le Corre's thesis, in which she presents a phonology and grammar of semi-literate Confederate soldiers of Virginia during the Civil War, 1861-1865 (Le Corre, 2015). The use of "mought," "shet," "holp" were still common in their correspondences as well as a host of other forms.

extracts from a special and little-known work by the same author are valuable for our purpose, as they convey much information on the archaisms which were at least then prevalent in America, and distinguish in many cases between American and English pronunciation... (Ellis, 1869, 1063-1064)

Here Ellis' veiled criticism of Webster's dictionary published in 1841 appears to allude to the purging of Webster's spelling proposals by his son-in-law, Goodrich (cf. below). In this sense, Ellis unintentionally contributed to the exaggerated claims that North American pronunciation and grammar offer a mirror image of the English language as it was once spoken in England centuries ago, a view which persisted well into the 20th century. Marckwardt (1958) is said to be the first to have coined the term "colonial lag."

While this contention has now been rejected as a "myth," I would take a middle road in this debate and argue that some non-standard American varieties, such as in Appalachia, the Chesapeake Bay or the Outer Banks of North Carolina, do indeed preserve a host of interesting and even remarkable archaisms of all kinds which are indeed characteristic of 16th-, 17th- and 18th-century stages of English. But, as one must expect, these same varieties also possess numerous linguistic innovations. As we have seen in Part III, teasing apart the precise origins and sources of these features is an arduous task.

1.4 Webster's Orthographic Scheme

The appendix of Webster's *Dissertations* presents Franklin's RMS under the title of "An Essay on the Necessity, Advantages, and Practicality of Reforming the Mode of Spelling and of Rendering the Orthography of Words Correspondent to Pronunciation" (Webster, 1789, 398-411). Although it is not within the scope of this book to detail all of Webster's orthographic proposals, it is here that we can observe the technical dimension of Franklin's influence on Webster most directly. A few examples will show the extent to which he and, indirectly, the American spelling system has been affected by Franklin. Nevertheless, a cursory glance at a contemporary Webster-Merriam dictionary will reveal the extent to which Webster's original spelling reform was intentionally watered down over the decades by those insiders who sought to limit Webster's proposals. If he failed, however, this is largely due to the fact that his initial approach was ineffectual and illogical. Nor is it at all certain that an unmodified version of Franklin's RMS model would have ever been adopted in America on account of its complexity. What follows is an outline of Webster's spelling proposals:

1. The omission of all superfluous or silent letters; as *a* in *bread*. Thus *bread*, *head*, *give*, *breast*, *built*, *meant*, *realm*, *friend*, would be spelt, *bred*, *hed*, *giv*, *brest*, *bilt*, *ment*, *relm*, *frend*. Would this alteration produce any inconvenience, any embarrassment or expense? By no means. On the other hand, it would lessen

the trouble of writing, and much more, of learning the language; it would reduce the true pronunciation to a certainty; and while it would assist foreigners and our own children in acquiring the language, it would render the pronunciation uniform, in different parts of the country, and almost prevent the possibility of changes. (Ibid., 394)

This description concerns only short <e> /ɛ/ and <i> /ɪ/ and corresponds to similar proposals made by former orthoepists. He also repeats an argument close to Franklin's heart and that of the orthoepists of the 16th and 17th centuries, namely, that it would assist children and foreigners to acquire a correct pronunciation of England and help them to learn to read and write more quickly. Here we can also almost hear Franklin calling out for no "superfluous letters" or "one letter for one sound." In the preceding examples, it is here that Webster follows Franklin's model most closely. Unfortunately, he did not adhere to the rest of his scheme and it is here that he makes his first error of logic.

2. A substitution of a character that has a certain definite sound, for one that is more vague and indeterminate. Thus by putting *ee* instead of *ea* or *ie*, the words *mean*, *near*; *speak* *grieve*, *zeal*, would become *meen*, *neer*; *speek*, *greev*, *zeel*. This alteration could not occasion a moment's trouble; at the same time it would prevent a doubt respecting the pronunciation; whereas the *ea* and *ie* having different sounds, may give a learner much difficulty. (Ibid.)

Statements such as these show how much more innovative Webster's speech was in comparison to Franklin, who pronounced many of these words with a C1 [ɛ: ~ ɐ] vowel. However, this is where his scheme begins to fall apart. By using the traditional English <ee> spelling to transcribe /i:/, he had no way of representing /ɛ:/ or /ɛ/. There is a knock-on effect concerning <a> which he is then forced to use to represent both /ɛ(:)/ and /æ/. As we shall see, the decision was fatal to his reform.

3. Thus *greef* should be substituted for *grief*; *kee* for *key*; *beleev* for *believe*; *laf* for *laugh*; *dawter* for "daughter," *plow* for "plough"; *tuf* for "tough"; *proov* for "prove"; *blud* for "blood"; and *draft* for *draught*.

Of all these examples, only "draft" was incorporated into the American spelling system. He continues with the following proposals:

tuf for "tough"; *proov* for "prove"; *blud* for "blood"; and *draft* for "draught." In this manner *ch* in Greek derivatives, should be changed into *k*; for the English *ch* has a soft sound, as in *cherish*; but *k* always a hard sound. Therefore *character*; *chorus*, *cholic*, *architecture*, should be written *karacter*; *korus*, *kolic*, *arkitecture*; and were they thus written, no person could mistake their true pronunciation. (Ibid., 395)

Adopting <k> in place of traditional <ch> is another feature imagined by Franklin in words like *Karacter*. Yet, Webster retains the <c> before <t> or in final position.

One wonders why he would not have used <k> for <c> in all positions *karakter*, *korus*, *kolik*, *arkitekture*.

Webster also adopts the principle of doubling consonants to represent long vowels, just as Franklin had done for /i:/ and /ε:/. Webster (1789, 395) clearly indicates long /u:/ <oo> of *proov* “prove” (which Franklin did not do), but then he makes no allowance for short /u/ in his scheme. He has <u> for short /ʌ/ *tuf* “tough.” Given that he was from Connecticut, it is possible, as Grandgent suggested, that he did not have the [ɪ] vowel in *Strut* or *Foot* words. One is left with the distinct impression that he did not examine Franklin’s system in detail.

4. Thus *ch* in French derivatives should be changed into *sh*; *machine*, *chaise*, *chevalier*, should be written *masheen*, *shaze*, *shevaleer*; and *pique*, *tour*, *oblique*, should be written *peek*, *toor*, *obleek*. (Ibid.)

Here we see the effects of the error committed in n°2. By using the traditional English <ee> convention to reflect /i:/, as seen in the New England town records of Part III, i.e. *meening* for “meaning”), he fails to understand Franklin’s revolutionary decision to base his vocalic system on the continental European languages. For instance, Franklin’s single <e> represented /ε/ and his <ee> or <ê> was realized as /ε: ~ ɛ:/.

As mentioned above, Webster has no convenient manner to distinguish between the <a> of *shaze* [ɛ: ~ ε:] for “chaise,” the <a> [æ] of *shevaleer* [ʃɛvæ'li:ɪ] “chevalier” or the <a> [ə ~ a ~ æ] *masheen* [mæ'ʃi:n]. Note also his use of final silent <e> of *shaze*, thus violating his own superfluous-letter rule. Another example of this violation his spelling of *dawter* rather than Franklin’s fused <aa> for [ɔ: ~ ɑ:], which Franklin would have written as in *daatyr*:

5. A trifling alteration in a character, or the addition of a point would distinguish different sounds, without the substitution of a new character. Thus a very small stroke across *th* would distinguish its two sounds. A point over a vowel, in this manner, *â*, or *û*, or *î* might answer all the purposes of different letters. And for the diphthong *ow*, let the two letters be united by a small stroke, or both engraven on the same piece of metal, with the left hand line of the *w* united to the *o*.

These, with a few other inconsiderable alterations, would answer every purpose, and render the orthography sufficiently correct and regular. (Webster, 1789, 395)

Admittedly, his decision to add a circumflex accent to *a*, *u* or *i* could have been useful, but he does not explain their function or value and no examples are given to assist the reader. Another inconsistency is revealed here. Once again, in a feeble attempt to respect his “one sound for one letter” rule, he suggests adding a “small stroke” to join the following digraphs: <ow>, [au] and <th> to reveal /ð/ (rather than using Franklin’s h-looking character or (1779, 470a) or Smith’s <ð> (Smith, 1568)). He makes no reference to how he would present <sh> of *masheen*.

In his *A Collection of Essays and Fugitiv Writings: On Moral, Historical, Political and Literary Subjects*, published in 1790, he applies his spelling proposals in a very loose, haphazard way that bears little resemblance to the system proposed in his *Dissertations*. The reception of his spelling proposal was met with cruel derision from all quarters (see below).

In short, Franklin's system was far more scientific and well-thought-through than Webster's, which contains many contradictory proposals. Furthermore, his scheme was no longer phonetic or even phonemic and was thus of little help to assist learners in mastering a standard or "fixed" pronunciation of any kind. In the end, one is left with the impression that Webster had not even deigned to read Franklin's proposals in detail.

To summarize, his ambitions to define an American model of pronunciation far exceeded his talents as a phonetician and this certainly contributed to many of the setbacks and humiliations that he later experienced. At another level, however, Webster's tremendous determination and passion energized him to produce dictionaries that were progressively voluminous, ambitious and, from a purely lexicological perspective, praiseworthy. Ultimately, the initial impetus to undertake such a huge endeavour owes much to Franklin's RMS.

1.5 Advantages of a Reform

The advantages of a reform that Webster cites in his *Dissertations* are almost identical to those proposed by Franklin and, indirectly, to Franklin's interpretations, who merely restates what the 16th- and 17th-century orthoepists had expressed long before him. To be fair, Webster does cite the names of several orthoepists but I feel that he may have done so at Franklin's advice. Webster summarizes the advantages of a new spelling system as follows:

1) These, with a few other inconsiderable alterations, would answer every purpose, and render the orthography sufficiently correct and regular. The advantages to be derived from these alterations are numerous, great and permanent.

The simplicity of the orthography would facilitate the learning of the language. It is now the work of years for children to learn to spell; and after all, the business is rarely accomplished. A few men, who are bred to some business that requires constant exercise in writing, finally learn to spell most words without hesitation; but most people remain, all their lives, imperfect in matters of spelling, and liable to make mistakes, whenever they take up a pen to write a short note. Nay, many people, even of education and fashion, never attempt to write a letter, without frequently consulting a dictionary. (Ibid., 395-396)

These points are almost all stated in Franklin's letter of September 28, 1768 to Polly Stevenson (cf. also Hark, Wallis and Wilkins, Chapter 13, Volume I):

2) But with the proposed orthography, a child would learn to spell, without trouble, in a very short time, and the orthography being very regular, he would

ever afterwards find it difficult to make a mistake. It would, in that case, be as difficult to spell wrong, as it is now to spell right. (Ibid. p. 396)

Here again, the source of this remark is Franklin's second September 28th letter to Polly Stevenson. The problem here is that Webster's original spelling proposal is highly irregular and ruins any chance for its future use as a pedagogical tool of the kind imagined by Franklin.

3) Besides this advantage, foreigners would be able to acquire the pronunciation of English, which is now so difficult and embarrassing, that they are either wholly discouraged on the first attempt, or obliged, after many years of labor, to rest contented with an imperfect knowledge of the subject. (Ibid.)

This merely repeats what Franklin and many orthoepists going back to Sir Thomas Smith had been saying for over two hundred years. His final point hearkens back to the political and ideological front.

4) But a capital advantage of this reform in these states would be, that it would make a difference between the English orthography and the American. This will startle those who have not attended to the subject; but I am confident that such an event is an object of vast political consequence.

This argument culminates with his reproval of the Americans' "blind imitation" of British manners and speech.

However they may boast of Independence, and the freedom of their government, yet their *opinions* are not sufficiently independent; an astonishing respect for the arts and literature of their parent country, and a blind imitation of its manners, are still prevalent among the Americans. Thus an habitual respect for another country, deserved indeed and once laudable, turns their attention from their own interests, and prevents their respecting themselves.

Webster's annoyance with his countrymen's continued attachment to England and its language, literature and culture overlooks an important fact. As we saw in Chapter 6, in addition to being Massachusettsans, Rhode Islanders, etc. many Americans simply felt they were ethnically English or at least "British" and, despite the Revolution, which was largely a political and religious affair (Waldman, 2008), most Americans of that time still felt bonds of attachment to their former motherland (cf. the demographic makeup of New England according to the 1790 US census, Chapter 12).

1.6 Franklin, Webster and the English Orthoepist Tradition

As stated previously (cf. Chapters 13 and 25), Benjamin Vaughan, Franklin's devoted editor and admirer, states that he discovered the name of "a certain" Sir Thomas Smith (1513-1577) in Franklin's notes while he was preparing his RMS for publication in 1779. Smith was one of the most renowned and the earliest

of the English orthoepists but Vaughan appears not to have recognized who he was. It therefore appears likely that Franklin advised Webster to consult the work of Sir Thomas Smith and other orthoepists discussed in Chapter 13 when they met at his home in 1786.

In this regard, a comparative examination of Franklin's RMS and Webster's *Dissertations* is crucial if not key to understanding the kinds of influence that Franklin may have exercised on Webster. Some of Webster's comments may very well shine a light on Franklin's direct sources which almost certainly have since been lost.

In a footnote, Webster adds the following as incidental information suggesting that he had not studied the matter personally in detail. Neither does he cite Franklin as the possible source of this information. He merely writes, "Several attempts were formerly made in England to rectify the orthography of the language" (Webster, 1789, 394):

The first by Sir Thomas Smith, secretary of state to Queen Elizabeth : Another by Dr. Gill, a celebrated master of St. Paul's school in London: Another by Mr. Charles Butler, who went so far as to print his book in his proposed orthography: Several in the time of Charles the first; and in the present age, Mr Elphinstone has published a treatise in a very ridiculous orthography...⁵

The fact that Webster's reference to the orthoepists appears in a footnote suggests one of two things: either he simply wanted to brush aside any reference to their work in order to highlight his own and/or he only had a superficial understanding of their contributions. We have seen that he alludes to "several" orthoepists during the time of Charles I which, in Chapter 13, I identified as John Wallis (whom Webster cites fourteen times in his *Dissertations*) and John Wilkins (whom he cites three times). He does not mention Hodges or Cooper.

Webster makes a reference to John Wilkins in a brief remark about the word "gin" for "given" which he claimed was still common in America in his day and which Wilkins associated with northern England... Recall that for the last four years of his life he served as Bishop of Chester until 1672. *Gin* and *gi'n* are attested in both Cheshire and Lancashire but also throughout the North (especially Northumberland and Scotland).

GIN or "gyn"⁶ for given is still used in America; as Bishop Wilkins remarks, it is in the North of England. (Webster, 1789, 386)

In the preface of his *Compendious Dictionary* (1806, i), Webster quotes Wallis:

⁵ Cf. Elphinstone, 1765.

⁶ We *gin* (= given) "We gave / have given" was still used by Lowell in 1848, another example of linguistic continuity with British English. *Gin* is used several times in Lowell's *Biglow Papers* proving it was still commonly used in the Massachusetts vernacular in the mid-19th century, for example "His folks gin the letter to me and I shew it to parson Wilbur."

For example, those distinguished scholars following the opinion of Wallis, supposed “own” to be a participle of the verb to “owe”; when a moderate acquaintance with the Saxon will show that it has not the remotest connection with that verb. Indeed a man, well versed in etymology, will at once see the improbability, not to say, impossibility, that two words of such distinct significations, as to be *indebted* and to *possess*, can have sprung from a common root.⁷

With exception of Wallis, it appears that Webster’s acquaintance with, or interest in, the other orthoepists was minor and their proposals to effect an orthographic reform were clearly peripheral to his main objective, which was becoming increasingly lexically-centred. His own presentation of the phonological system, as we saw above, bears little resemblance to the rigorous methodology applied by the early orthoepists or Franklin’s RMS, hence the incoherence of Webster’s earliest spelling proposals.

Initially I wondered if 18th-century American libraries possessed these early works on orthoepy and whether Webster may have access to these on his own prior to meeting Franklin in 1786. The most likely scenario is that Franklin supplied him with his personal notes about the work of these orthoepists, notes which have not survived. This hypothesis is admittedly founded on scanty evidence. My logic is that, if Vaughan found references to Sir Thomas Smith, he may also have had notes on other orthoepists that Webster mentions in his *Dissertations* and which may have since been lost. If Webster was not already acquainted with the early works of these orthoepists, he would only have had three years to find and consult their works prior to the publication of his book in 1789. Considering that, by Webster’s own admission, it was Franklin who convinced him that a spelling reform was a realistic objective, it is unlikely that he would have explored their work prior to 1786.

Another question is whether Vaughan may have returned Franklin’s notes (and fonts) to him after printing his works in 1779, in which case Franklin may have simply passed them on to Webster. Or did Franklin have another set of documents (copies of his letters and notes) that he had kept for himself and to which Vaughan may not have had access? We have seen that Polly Stevenson’s copies of Franklin’s RMS sent to her in 1768 appear not to have been shared with anyone since they were later donated directly by her family to the American Philosophical Society Archives (cf. Appendix 2). I have no reliable answer to any of these questions at this stage and further research is needed to clarify these points.

Prior to the publication of his *American Dictionary of the American Language* in 1828, Webster did finally visit England where he visited British libraries. Given that he had already given up on imposing the radical spelling reform that both he and Franklin had originally hoped for, it is unlikely that he studied the

7 In fact, Webster was mistaken here: OE *āgen* “belonging to oneself” and *āgan* “to own, possess.” Both have etymological links.

most famous of these orthoepists during his stay at Cambridge in 1827.

1.7 Webster's Modification of Franklin's Scheme

Despite Webster's stated admiration for Franklin and their common goal to modernize English orthography, we have seen that their technical approaches were radically different, with Franklin advocating the use of a phonologically-based alphabet, like many of the orthoepists who preceded him, and strict adherence to the principle of "one sound for one letter." Even though Franklin provided Webster with the six new characters he had designed for his spelling reform, Webster discarded the idea out of hand, "from the very beginning (cf. his first letter to Franklin of May 24, 1786)" preferring to make do with the older traditional alphabet as Bullokar and others had advocated. This, as we have seen in the first part of this chapter, was the approach advocated by Sir William Jones 1786. With regard to the 16th- and 17th-century English orthoepists, Webster writes rather contemptuously about the idea of introducing new characters:

But I apprehend their schemes failed of success, rather on account of their intrinsic difficulties, than on account of any necessary impracticability of a reform. *It was proposed, in most of these schemes, not merely to throw out superfluous and silent letters, but to introduce a number of new characters. Any attempt on such a plan must undoubtedly prove unsuccessful. It is not to be expected that an orthography, perfectly regular and simple, such as would be formed by a *Synod of Grammarians on principles of science, will ever be substituted for that confused mode of spelling which is now established* (my italics and underlining). But it is apprehended that great improvements may be made, and an orthography almost regular, or such as may obviate most of the present difficulties which occur in learning our language, may be introduced and established with little trouble and opposition. (Webster, 1789, 394)

So, Webster simultaneously acknowledges the scientific merit of their work but rejects their approaches, considering that they can never be applied to correct such a chaotic orthographic system. Here he was wrong, of course, but whether the complexity of learning a radically new phonetically-based orthographic system would have been feasible is an entirely different question and, to be fair, his rejection of such a system was based on this practical concern.

Based on the model he himself proposes, it seems very probable that he simply never totally understood the mechanics of Franklin's proto-phonemic system. This alone most likely explains Webster's outright rejection of Franklin's scheme and those proposed by earlier orthoepists. Later in the book, he clarifies and softens his criticism of Franklin's model.

To excite the more attention to this subject I will here publish what Dr. Franklin has done and written to effect a reform in our mode of spelling. This sage philosopher has suffered nothing useful to escape his notice. He very early discovered the difficulties that attend the learning of our language; and with his usual ingenuity

invented a plan to obviate them. If any objection can be made to his scheme, it is the substitution of new characters for th, sh, ng, etc. whereas a small stroke, connecting the letters would answer all the purposes of new characters; as these combinations would thus become single letters, with precise definite sounds and suitable names. (Ibid., 406)

Webster makes amends by outwardly stating that he accepts the principles of Franklin's system, except for the addition of new characters. As I have already mentioned, however, the idea of a "small stroke" is merely a cosmetic solution that runs counter to the underlying concept on which Franklin's RMS was based: "one sound for one letter."

1.8 A Golden Age for the English Language?

It should be stressed that Webster and Franklin had a relatively clear idea of the linguistic model at the grammatical and lexical level, if not in terms of phonology. In the final chapter of his *Dissertations*, in which Webster includes a complete version of Franklin's treatise on the spelling reform, he praises a number of English writers who had formerly been lauded for the "purity" of their language and style while at the same time condemning others. He then offers a very precise timeframe during which, he believed, the English language had reached its zenith. In a particularly revealing passage of his *Dissertations*, Webster argues that the golden age of the English language extended from the age of Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603) to 1727, the date that marks the end of the reign of King George I (as a Lutheran, but nominal Anglican, more or less sympathetic to the dissident cause) and the beginning of the reign of George II (1727-1760). The unspoken political message here is obvious.

But when a language has arrived at a certain stage of improvement, it must be stationary or become retrograde; for improvements in science either cease, or become slow and too inconsiderable to affect materially the tone of a language.

This stage of improvement is the period when a nation abounds with writers of the first class, both for abilities and taste. This period in England commenced with the age of Queen Elizabeth and ended with the reign of George II. (Webster, 1789, 30)

Webster then expresses more precisely the opinion that the climax was reached during the reign of Queen Anne (1707-1714) and that of "her successor," George I (1714-1727), implying that the decline began after 1727 and continued until 1760s, a view which corresponds quite well with Franklin's dating of the beginning of the decline, i.e. 1730 (cf. his third December 16, 1789 letter to Webster above; cf. his examples; "employ" for "improve," etc.). Interestingly, these dates conform precisely to those Mazarin has stated as the advent of the Type D variety of English (1730-1800), the most evolved phase of English he

describes. Whether Webster's English is closer to Type C2 (1650-1750) or Type D is somewhat unclear. From the examples he has given above, and in his 1790 *Fugitiv Writings*, I would say the latter.

It would have been fortunate for the language, had the stile of writing *and the pronunciation of words been fixed, as they stood in the reign of Queen Anne and her successor* (my italics). Few improvements have been made since that time; *but innumerable corruptions in pronunciation have been introduced by Garrick, and in stile, by Johnson, Gibbon and their imitators* (my italics). (Webster, 1789, 30)

It appears quite evident that Webster's evaluation of the conservatism of his own speech, or that of his fellow New Englanders, is delusional in the sense that his own English was far more innovative than he himself appears to have realized: for instance, [i:] for *Meat* words, [a:] for *Bath* and *Start* words, [ʌ] for *Strut* words, etc.

In Chapter 2 (Part I, Volume I), which focused on Franklin's childhood and his early education, we saw that the English style of writing which he discovered during his adolescence and which he most appreciated was Addison and Steele's *Spectator*. Rhetoric and the Socratic method of debate were subjects which fascinated him and by, his own account, he learned to master these at an early age. Yet, later in his *Autobiography*, he candidly admits that he was never a truly eloquent speaker (cf. Chapter 25). Franklin was a voracious reader, and, although my objective is not to diminish Webster's contributions or abilities, there are indications that Webster's remarks about the literary quality of English writers owe a lot to discussions he may have had with Franklin on the matter during his 1786 visit(s) to Philadelphia. These and similar comments may also have been discussed in the notes and papers Franklin furnished him. Webster's identification of a golden age for both English language and literature would also seem to result from their exchanges. Furthermore, no such statements, or anything remotely similar to them, are forthcoming in his other writings with which I am familiar.

In addition, having been born during this "golden age," the implication is that the English that Franklin had spoken and heard around him as a young man in Boston was largely free of the bastardizations and other innovations condemned by Webster and identified by Franklin.

An indication that Webster may have followed Franklin's judgement in literary matters is to be seen in the following passage:

The great Sidney wrote in a pure stile; yet the best models of purity and elegance, are the works of Sir William Temple, Dr. Middleton, Lord Bolingbroke, Mr. Addison and Dean Swift. But a little inferior to these, are the writings of Mr. Pope, Sir Richard Steele, Dr. Arbuthnot, with some of their contemporaries. Sir William Blackstone has given the law stile all the elegance and precision of which it is capable. *Dr. Price and Dr. Priestley write with purity, and Sir William Jones seems to have copied the ease, simplicity and elegance of Middleton and Addison* (my italics). (Webster, 1789, 31)

The last sentence is of particular interest given that Price, Priestley and Jones fit squarely in the period of decline, not in the timeframe fixed within this supposed English golden age. These writers would thus be exceptions to the general tendency. In Webster's view, they qualify as masters of English writing. The fact that Price, Priestley and Jones were also among Franklin's most esteemed friends and that they belonged to the same "Club of Honest Whigs" leaves me with the distinct impression that, although Webster may have been sincere in his appraisals, he was also trying to please Franklin. If so, this would somewhat temper my impressions about a possible rift between the two men.

It should come as no surprise then that those writers he condemns, in particular Samuel Johnson and Edward Gibbon, were staunch Tories. I have mentioned previously that Franklin and Johnson lived less than one mile from each other's homes. During Franklin's many years in London, they only are recorded as having met once and, apparently, took an instant dislike to one another. This was no doubt due to their diametrically opposed views on nearly every imaginable political and religious subject. In particular, Johnson rejected American pleas for greater political representation. He was a steadfast Tory, a fervent Anglican and firm supporter of the King as head of the Church of England as well as the subordination of the will of the people to the king's authority. Related to this last point, he believed it was the duty of the common people to adhere to the hierarchical social order which reigned in Britain at the time: *chacun à sa place*. David Garrick's close association with Johnson could explain Webster's condemnation of his written style which is described as wordy and too Latinate.

As we have seen throughout this book, positive or negative attitudes towards language varieties often reflect social and political judgements about their speakers. Opinions based on strictly linguistic criteria often appear to be secondary and arbitrary. As we have seen above, Webster's opinions are particularly coloured by his own ideology of linguistic purism.

But how few of the **modern** writers have **pursued** the same **manner** of writing? Johnson's **stile** is a **mixture** of Latin and English; an **intolerable composition** of **Latinity**, **affected** smoothness, **scholastic accuracy** and roundness of **periods**. The **benefits derived** from his **morality** and his **erudition**, will hardly **counterbalance** the mischief done by his **manner** of writing. The names of a Robertson, a Hume, a Home and a Blair, almost **silence criticism**; but I must **repeat** what a **very** learned Scotch **gentleman** once acknowledged to me, "that the Scotch writers are not **models** of the **pure English stile**." Their **stile** is **generally** stiff, sometimes **very** awkward, and not always **correct**.

Robertson **labors** his **stile** and sometimes **introduces** a word merely for the sake of **rounding** a **period**. Hume has borrowed French **idioms** without **number**; in other **respects** he has given an **excellent model** of **historical stile**. Lord Kaimes' **manner** is stiff; and Dr. Blair, whose **stile** is less **exceptionable** in these **particulars**, has however **introduced**, into his writings, several **foreign idioms**

and **ungrammatical phrases**. The Scotch writers now stand almost the first for **erudition**; but perhaps no man can write a **foreign language** with **genuine purity**.

Gibbon's **harmony of prose** is **calculated** to delight our ears; but it is **difficult** to **comprehend** his meaning and the **chain** of his **ideas**, as fast as we **naturally** read; and almost **impossible** to **recollect** them, at any **subsequent period**. **Perspicuity**, the first **requisite** in **style**, is sometimes **sacrificed** to **melody**; the mind of a reader is **constantly** dazzled by a glare of **ornament**, or **charmed** from the **subject** by the **music** of the **language**. As he is one of the first, it is hoped he may be the last, to **attempt** the **gratification** of our ears, at the **expense** of our understanding. (Webster, 1789, 34)

As for his criticism of Latinate vocabulary, I have highlighted all the vocabulary in this passage of Latin or French origin. So much for plain, Anglo-Saxon English! According to Webster, artifice, pretention, the overabundance of Latinate vocabulary, foreign idiom and rigidity of style are the major defects of English and Scottish writers during the second half of the 18th century. This recalls Francis Bacon, John Wilkins and other Protestant writers' calls for simplicity and plainness of style which Wilkins expresses with clarity (with an equal number of Latinate terms, however).

It must be plain and natural, not being darkened with the affectation of scolasticall harshnesse, or Rhetorical flourishes. Obscurity in the discourse is an argument of ignorance of the minde... it must be full without empty and needlesse Tautologies, which are to be avoided in every solid business, much more in sacred. Our expressions should be so close, that they may not be obscure, and so plain that they may not seem vain and tedious. (Wilkins' *Ecclesiastes*, cited by Görlach, 1991, 33).

Franklin praises his maternal grandfather, Rev. Peter Folger, whose English literary style he describes as being "written with a good deal of decent plainness and manly freedom" (BF, p. 11).

2. Webster on his Own: Defining the Model

Ironically, however, while Webster criticized men such as Sheridan and Walker for their arrogance in defining the pronunciation of the British Empire on the model of the accents of high-born, educated Londoners and the Court, Webster also had very clear ideas about what the American linguistic model should resemble, namely, the English he heard in Connecticut during his childhood most notably in the mouths of older, well-educated New England gentlemen.

Following the conclusions stated in the first part of this chapter, Webster's crusade in favour of an "American" model of English should not be taken literally as the creation of a linguistically innovative American model separate from that formerly spoken in England. Quite the contrary, Webster considered

that cultivated, disparitary New England English, the secular version of the New England's ecclesiastical standard that was spoken by the best educated members of society, had preserved the most elegant features of the English of England as it had once been spoken in England during the supposed golden age, that is, prior to the 1730s. This would imply speakers like Franklin but also those sharing features of the Type C1 and C2 varieties of English.

In his *Compendious Dictionary* published in 1806, Webster defends this idea. We see here that, when it suits him, he deigns to cite Samuel Johnson:

In the northern states, it has been customary for gentlemen of education to follow the rule laid down by the great Dr. Johnson, "That those are the most elegant speakers, who deviate least from the written language." Notwithstanding what Walker has remarked upon this observation, I must consider it as preeminently the best rule to direct the national practice of pronunciation, that was ever offered, and the only correct standard by which usage can be generally regulated. (Webster, 1806, xv)

On the face of it, here he seems to stray from his remarks about the linguistic purity of the "folk" cited earlier. In Part IV, we saw that Franklin's rule of transcribing final unstressed syllables as if they were fully stressed may be partly attributed to Johnson's axiom. Webster then continues extolling the unity of the English of New England gentlemen:

This reasoning is justified by a remarkable fact. Before the publication of Sheridan's Dictionary, *the pronunciation of words in the northern states was so uniform, that it is doubtful whether the gentlemen of education differed in fifty words* (my italics and underlining); and this uniformity still exists, among those who have made no use of any standard author. Yet the standard authors themselves and those who follow them, differ in some thousands of words.

It is further to be remarked that the common unadulterated pronunciation of the New England gentlemen, *is almost uniformly the pronunciation which prevailed in England, anterior to Sheridan's time, and which, I am assured by English gentlemen, is still the pronunciation of the body of the British nation*; the pronunciation recommended by Sheridan and Walker being there called the London dialect, and considered as a corruption (my italics and underlining). (Ibid., xvi)

His comments about the remarkable uniformity of the English of New England gentlemen seems to tie in well with educated Englishmen's observations of Americans of all classes during the 18th century (Read, 1933) and appear to reflect the disparitary register of the koine that had evolved there in the course of the 17th century. This last remark is particularly striking in that, by referring to pronunciations that were still common to the "body of the British nation," it would appear that Webster is alluding to Type C1/C2 pronunciations still spoken in rural England of a sort that one observes in much of the poetry of the late 18th-century New England poets and in Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanack* that we

observed in Part III of this volume. In his discussions with Webster, one wonders to what extent Franklin had cultivated aspects of a London accent or whether he simply spoke to Webster with a recognizably conservative New England pronunciation (cf. Part III)? There appears to be an obvious contradiction here.

Again, Webster's comment here seems to contradict what we know about his own English accent which appears to have resembled Mazarin's more innovative Type D pronunciation. While I have concluded that Franklin's natural Massachusetts pronunciation was closer to the C1 variety, the model for his RMS is, very globally, also representative of the Type D phase.

Furthermore, his vindictive downgrading of London English to the status of a corrupt "dialect" is telling. Reading between the lines, he is basically asserting that, outside of the London area, the gentlemen of the rest of England, like the New Englanders, continue to speak a form of English that remains "uncorrupted" by the innovations current in the city of London. This agrees with many of the linguistic observations and conclusions expressed in Chapter 24 and Chapter 28 (cf. Figures 28.5-7).

In this sense, Webster's ideas preceded Marckwardt's "colonial lag" hypothesis. This explains why he remained convinced that the English descendants of America, particularly in New England, had preserved the best English that was formerly spoken in England and, once again, was shared in his day by Englishmen living outside of the capital.

I am constrained to declare that the people of America, in particular the English descendants, speak the most pure English now known in the world (my italics). There is hardly a foreign idiom in their language; by which I mean, a phrase that has not been used by the best English writers from the time of Chaucer. They retain a few obsolete words which have been dropt by writers, probably from mere affectation, as those which are substituted are neither more melodious nor expressive. (Webster, 1789, 288)

Paradoxically, the characteristics of Chaucer's and Shakespeare's English that survived in America (a-prefixing, multiple negation, irregular verbal morphology, etc.) were precisely the non-standard features that both Webster and Franklin sought to erase!

Webster is quite candid in expressing his belief that the ideal model for American English, should be that of the New England gentleman, that is, his own!

However this may be, I know from careful examination, that *the old pronunciation* is established on the authority of a thousand years practice; that it accords with the above recited rule of Johnson, corresponding best with the written language, *preserving the natural sounds of the letters and the established principles of analogy. To these principles, men of taste should bow, with the reverence which is inspired by antiquity, and supported by a love of truth (my italics).* (Webster, 1783, xvi)

Here we have a strong taste of the nascent Romantic views which were to become so popular during the 19th century. Webster then takes another swipe at the contemporary English orthoepists:

The English authors who aim to fix a standard refine too much upon sounds; for excessive refinement in language, like metaphysical subtleties in ethics and theology, insted [sic] of producing the desired conformity of opinions, tend to awaken doubts, distract opinions, and generate endless controversy and confusion. (Ibid.)

Nevertheless, Webster is most likely referring to the disparitary, literary-influenced koine that New Englanders heard spoken by the clergy during the weekly sermons or their best educated administrators, cultivated businessmen, school masters and barristers. It was this mesolect that was now prized as the language of formal communication in North America.

This is to me the most likely explanation for Webster's description of the harmonious linguistic nature of New England English as spoken by educated gentlemen such as himself.

Lurking behind the word "American" English, one must understand that Webster understood it to be the untainted English spoken in England prior to 1730. The political dimension of this belief is closely bound to these linguistic statements. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Mazarin dates the beginning of the Type D phase of English to 1730. Again, when he speaks of a national linguistic standard for the United States, he is really speaking about a disparitary standard of "English" as it was once spoken in England prior to the attempts by the orthoepists ("coxcombs," as he describes most of them) to regulate it.

The fact that Franklin's sources for his own reform appear to cease with 17th-century orthoepists such as Wallis and Wilkins (and perhaps Butler and Gil) could be another indication of Franklin's belief that England's golden age was bound to that century and not to the second half of the 18th century. My general impression is that Webster, who had met Franklin in person, must have been struck by aspects of the Type C1/C2 phase of English whereas the paradox is that his RMS sits squarely in the Type D phase with certain characteristics reminiscent of C2.

2.1 Implementing Webster's Spelling Reform: A Failed Attempt

One of Webster's first public attempts to implement his reform, and indirectly Franklin's RMS, appears in the Preface to his *A Collection of Essays and Fugitiv Writings: On Moral, Historical, Political and Literary Subjects* published in 1790. In this publication, one gets an idea of how far he was willing to go to introduce such a reform but, also, the haphazard way he goes about it. It is almost as if he is making a point *not* to follow Franklin's scheme. Whatever one's opinion,

it was a courageous but risky step in the direction advocated by Franklin, but it would also be his.

... On such occasions a riter wil naturally giv himself up to hiz feelings, and hiz manner of riting wil flow from hiz manner of thinking.

Most of thoz peeces, which hav appeered before in periodical papers and Magazeens, were published with fictitious signatures; for I very erly discovered, that altho the name of an old and respectable karacter givs credit and consequence to hiz ritings (i.e. Franklin's), yet the name of a yung man (i.e. Webster) iz often prejudicial to hiz performances. By conceding my name, the opinions of men hav been prezerved from an *undu* bias arizing from personal prejudices, the faults of the ritings hav been detected, and their merit in public estimation ascertained... (Webster, 1790, ix)

This liberty waz taken by the writers before the age of queen Elizabeth, and to this we are indeted for the preference of modern spelling over that of Gower and Chaucer. The man who admits that the change of *housbonde*, *mynde*, *ygone*, *moneth* into husband, mind, gone, month, iz an improovment,⁸ must acknowlege also the riting of helth, breth, rong, tung, munth, to be an improovment. There iz no alternativ. (Ibid., xi).

In the last paragraph Webster is simply paraphrasing the last paragraphs of Franklin's September 28, 1768 letter in which he counters the criticisms made by Polly Stevenson, namely, that English orthography would have been unreadable if it had not been modernized at the end of the Middle Ages:

...our writing will become the same with the Chinese, as to the difficulty of learning it and using it. And it already would have been such, if we had continued the Saxon spelling and writing, used by our forefathers. (Franklin, 1779, 478)

Nevertheless, had Webster followed Franklin's guidelines in his *Dissertations*, the transcription of this passage might have been more coherent. He does not use <k> systematically, for instance, in "*conceding*," which should have been spelt <konseeding> according to his system.

Furthermore, <th> (= /ð/) is not indicated with a stroke nor is (<ng> = /ŋ/) as he proposed in his *Dissertations*. Voiced [z] is not transcribed systematically either, nor does he eliminate final silent <e> in many words. Because he did not follow Franklin's scheme, the <a> /æ/ of <hav> and *karacter* does not correspond to the <a> /ɛ: ~ ɛ:/ of <papers> [ɛ: ~ ɛ:], <name> [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] or <change> [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] <estimation> [ɛ: ~ ɛ:], <ascertain> [ɛ: ~ ɛi] or *taken* [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] which are all spelt in the traditional manner. Franklin wrote "have" as (*hev* with his Boston pronunciation), "character" as *karaktyr* ['kæ.ɹæktɹɪ], "name" as *neem* [nɛ:m],

8 Here it is hard to know whether Webster's <oo> corresponds to /u:/ or /ʊ/, New England [u ~ ʊ ~ ʊ] (cf. Chapters 21 and 22), probably the former.

“papers” **peepyrz/pêpyrz* [pɛ:pəɪz], “estimation” as **estimeefyn/estimêfyn* [ɛstɪ'mɛ:ʃən], “ascertain” as *asyrteen/asyrtên* [æsɛɪ'tɛ:n] and taken as *teekyn/têkyn* [tɛ:kən].

Likewise, Webster's <i> corresponds to both /ɪ/ as in <givs> and /Ai/ for <i>. Nor does he distinguish between the <o> /ɔ:/ of <most> and <thoz> “those” ([ɔ:]) and the <o> /ɒ/ of <folts> “faults” and <consequence> ([ɒ]) which he spells in the traditional fashion. He has retained <c> and <qu>. Even if he has no symbol for /ɒ/, why did he not transcribe “consequence” <konsekwens>?

In short, Webster's system is erratic and impractical. More importantly, it does not give the learner any idea of how to pronounce each character thus violating the “one sound for one letter” rule which Webster brushes aside on at least two occasions. Note also his transcription of “undue,” <undu> would be interpreted by learners as [ʌn'dʌ]. It should be *undoo* [ʌn'du:] according to his own system. Franklin, however, would have written this word *yndu*, but with no indication of vowel length. Although Webster's system would still have been deficient, it would have been somewhat more coherent had he followed the rules he outlined in his *Dissertations*. The defects of his system regarding the value of his <i>, <a>, <o>, <ai> remain. Compare the three passages below. The first is the same as above. I have reworked the second passage in accordance with his own orthographic rules. The final passage is transcribed using Franklin's RMS scheme.

Most of thoz peeces, which hav appeered before in periodical papers and Magazeens, were published with fictitious signatures; for I very erly discovered, that altho the name of an old and respectable karacter givs credit and consequence to hiz ritings (i.e. Franklin's), yet the name of a yung man (i.e. Webster) iz often prejudicial to hiz performances. By conceding my name, the opinions of men hav been prezerved from an undu bias arizing from personal prejudices, the faults of the ritings hav been detected, and their merit in public estimation ascertained... (Webster, 1790, ix)

Most of thoz peeses, which hav apeerd befor in periodikal paperz and Magazeenz, wer publisht with fiktishus signaturz⁹; for I veri erli diskuverd, that altho the name ov an old and respektabl karakter givz kredit and konsekuens to hiz ritingz [sic], yet the name [sic] ov a yung man iz often prejudishal to hiz performansez. Bai konseeding my name, the opinionz ov men hav bin prezervd from an undoo bias arizing from personal prejudisez, the folts of the ritingz hav bin detekted, and ther merit in publik estimashun asertaind...

Franklin would most likely have transcribed the same passage in the following manner:

9 New England pronunciation of words like nature, scripture was nater ['nɛ:təɪ] and ['skɹɪptəɪ], etc. (cf. Chapter 27).

Most aaw ðoz piisez huitf hev apiird bifaar in periaadikal peepyrz and magaziinz wer pūblift uið fiktifys signatyrz; faar ʒi veri erli diskvvyrd ðat aaldō ðe neem aaw an old and respektabil karaktyr givz kredit to hiz pyrfaarmens and kaansekuens to hiz rʒitinʒ, iet ðe neem aaw e iunʒ man iz aʌften predʒudifal to hiz pyrfaarmens...

This attempt by Webster to sensitize the public to necessity for a modernized spelling system failed miserably and was met with cruel sarcasm, mockery and outright laughter by the majority of American traditionalists and critics who read this proposal. On the other hand, although unwieldy at first sight, we see that Franklin's scheme was far more scientific and well thought through.

2.2 Swimming against the Tide

Regardless of the weakness of his system, he remained convinced of the soundness of his ideas. Thanks to his tenacity and his quasi-religious zeal, Webster forged ahead with his plan to found a national orthography. However, with Franklin's death in April of 1790, Webster had now lost his most prestigious, if symbolic, ally. He was now more than ever alone to defend his ideas, which remained unpopular. As mentioned previously, despite the War of Independence, a large proportion of the American intelligentsia remained faithful to the English norm. For most colonials in America, their war was not against English culture, literature or language but rather with what they considered despotic government.

Facing increasing resistance even from within his own family (cf. below), Webster had to lower his expectations, if only to sell his dictionaries and relieve the financial burden on his family for the costs incurred by his earlier publications.

In his article in *The Atlantic* entitled "The Philosophy Behind the First American Dictionary," Peter Martin (2019) considers the passage cited above to be a "self-parody." I have a different reading of it. Considering Webster's ego, I sense an unspoken measure of frustration on his part stemming from the fact that Franklin's RMS had been taken seriously (or at least never publicly condemned), while his own ideas were derided. As I suggested above, the "old and respectable character," is most likely Franklin himself whose name and reputation alone "gives credit to and consequence to his writings" whereas his own work, which proposes a similar scheme (in his opinion at least) is criticized merely because he is a young man.

Indeed, we saw that Webster openly stated in his *Dissertations* that Franklin's introduction of six new characters was a proposition that would merely confuse the public it was intended to assist. And yet he is surprised that it is he, Webster, who is subject to ridicule. I interpret this to be yet another example of Webster's defensiveness and feelings of victimization. In characteristic manner, his

comments are in fact directed against those who disagree with his modified system of orthography, not because of the incoherence of his system, but simply because he feels it is they who have not seen the value of his proposals.

In reality, the difference between the two men is that Franklin's transcriptions are founded on scientific observation and have a certain aesthetic quality (cf. Abercrombie's assessment, 1981) which is lacking in Webster's. In some ways, Webster's system resembles that of the uneducated "countryman" to whom Franklin had made reference and it is for this very reason he and his spelling proposals were disparaged and mocked with such vehemence. Again, Franklin's RMS would probably have been rejected because of its apparent complexity.

2.3 *A Compendious Dictionary of the English Language*

In 1806, sixteen years after his *Collection of Essays and Fugitiv Writings* (1790) and a full twenty years after his first meeting with Franklin, Webster's first dictionary was published in New Haven, Connecticut, under the title of *A Compendious Dictionary of the English Language* proposing only modest orthographic changes to the traditional system. Many of these had already been in use in England since the time of Shakespeare: *color* for "colour," *center* for "centre," etc. Webster made systematic changes such as <nce> to <nse>: "defence" to *defense*, "offence" to *offense* and "pretence" to *pretense*, etc. We also observe the reduction of the English double <ll> of "woollen" and "travelling" to *woolen* and *traveling* as well as eliminating the final "k" of *almanack*, *publick* and *musick* which was being adopted in British English. All of these have now become part of the American orthographic system.

Compared to the huge sales of his Spellers, however, Webster's *Compendious Dictionary* was only a modest success. Nonetheless, despite its flaws, it won him grudging support and admiration, especially on the part of those patriotic Americans who were flattered by the idea that they now had an American model of speech. Part of its success was due to his abandonment of the radical orthographic changes he had proposed in the preface of his *Collection of Essays and Fugitiv Writings* (1790). Nevertheless, he stuck to his guns, and perhaps with Franklin's advice in mind, from then on, he decided to introduce his spelling changes little by little. He advocated a model of pronunciation for the nation that would reflect the usage of the majority of the American people. Contrary to RP which is used naturally by around 3% of British people (Trudgill 1974, 3), the majority of Americans have an accent resembling GA pronunciation.

This is the reason why the rules of lexicographers and the practice of poets are utterly disregarded by the bulk of the nation, who regulate and will for ever regulate, their practice by a decided preference of sounds – that is, by what may be termed the *natural accent* (Webster's italics). To oppose this popular preference of

a natural, easy, English accent, is as fruitless, as it is destructive of the uniformity of pronunciation and the beauties of speaking. (Webster, 1806, xiv)

This reference to the “natural accent” that is used by the “bulk of the nation” is still described in a similar fashion by Wells (2005, xiv) and, more elliptically, by Roach (2012, xii) with reference to General American English. In the preface to his *Compendious Dictionary*, he restates that his opposition to the rising London English standard of pronunciation is based on its foundation on rigid class distinctions, which he felt were totally unfitting for the new American Republic “where no man has to bow”:

The distinction of ranks in England seems to have had no inconsiderable influence in regulating the pronunciation of words. Who could believe, without positive evidence, that a compiler of Walker’s character, should utter the following sentiment. “The accent on the second syllable of this word, (commendable) is grown vulgar, and there needs no other reason for banishing it from polite pronunciation.” Are we then reduced to this condition of society, that the polite and the vulgar must have distinct languages! [sic] What! [sic] The commonest of pronunciation, the very reason why it ought to be preferred, is made the ground of its proscription! The ease of speaking, the beauties of the language, its established analogies, must be sacrificed to artificial refinements and a fashionable aversion to every thing common! Reasons like this may be well received in Great Britain; but to men who consider language as the instrument of common intercourse in society, and equally the property of every class of men, and who value uniformity and regular analogies as the prime excellencies of a language, will reprobate such reasons as fade and dangerous, or receive them with coldness and [d]isgust. (Webster, 1806, xv-xvi)

Here, we return once again to the vestiges of the Great Chain of Being. Webster vehemently condemns the class system in England and the tiny elite which takes it upon itself to regulate and define what is “elegant” and what is “vulgar.” He stresses that he refuses to accept that lower-class speakers and upper-class speakers should be considered as speaking different “languages.” He uses the word “common” three times, complaining that the “commonest of pronunciation,” spoken by the majority, is proscribed for that very reason. He condemns that the “artificial refinements” should stifle “every thing common,” concluding that language should be “the instrument of common intercourse” and “equally the property of every class of men.” This sounds very much like the thinking of Abbé Grégoire’s vision of a standard language for France which led to the active attempts by the French Republic to eradicate the patois and minority languages of France.

In the following passage, we have a clearer idea of what Webster means by “common.” In terms of the theoretical framework established in Part II (Chapters 10-15), Webster rejects the speakers of a narrow, unrepresentative English “acrolect” who are thousands of miles away but yet, paradoxically, both

Franklin and Webster criticize “common” regionalisms and dialectalisms in America which they both qualify as “ridiculous.”

What is “common English” for them, however, appears to be the educated mesolect, the disparitary New England koine which arose out of the English ecclesiastical and educated secular standards examined in Chapters 11 and 12. Both were akin to them. Webster explains his position further by writing “General custom is the rule of speaking, and every derivation from this must be wrong.” Importantly, at another level, Webster’s remarks also imply that the phonological foundations of the North American koines were similar in comparison to the English basilects then in common use in England.

Just as Franklin provided examples of dialectal features of American English that he considered unacceptable, Webster does the same in the following passage. In both cases, I take these examples to reflect features of the paritary colonial koines that had emerged in each region, not the educated mesolectal register he defends. In his *Grammatical Institute* (1783), he writes:

... I would observe that inhabitants of New England and Virginia have a peculiar pronunciation which affords much diversion to their neighbors. On the other hand, the language of the Middle States is tinctured with a variety of Irish, Scotch and German dialects which are justly censured as deviations from propriety and the standard of elegant pronunciation. The truth is *usus est Norma Loquendi*, general custom is the rule of speaking, and every derivation from this must be wrong. The dialect of one State is as ridiculous as that of another; each is authorized by local custom; and neither is supported by any superior excellence. (1783, 6)

This reference to the Irish, Scotch (i.e. the so-called “Scotch-Irish”) and Germans is interesting in the sense that he is referring to the large numbers of immigrants that were flowing into Pennsylvania, particularly following the end of the “French and Indian Wars” in 1760. However, recall that Fischer (1989) asserts that two-thirds of the Scotch-Irish or northern Britons as they were diversely called, arrived between 1765-1775, long after the koineization process was complete. In the following passage, Webster, like Franklin before him, reveals his elitist vision when he criticizes the regional vernaculars.

If in New-England we hear a flat drawling pronunciation, in more Southern States, we hear the words “veal,” “very,” “vulgar” pronounced *weal*, *wery*, *wulgar*; “wine,” “winter,” &c. changed into *vine*, *vinter*; “soft” becomes *saft*; and “raisins” and “wound,”¹⁰ contrary to all rule and propriety, are pronounced *resins* and *woond*.

It is the present mode of the Southward to pronounce u like yu, as *virtyue* and *fortyune*, &c. and in a rapid pronunciation, these become *virchue*, *forchune*, as also

10 I assume he means the past participle of the verb to “wind,” which the Virginians pronounced as [wu:nd].

“duty,” “duel,” are changed into *juty*, *juel*.¹¹ The advocates for this pronunciation pretend, that this is the English sound of u; but this cannot be true; because they do not give u the sound yu, to one word originally English. It seems to arise rather from an imitation of French, which has been a remarkable folly of the English nation; or perhaps it originated in a fondness for singularity which, has corrupted the language more than all the ignorance of the vulgar. But every innovation of this kind ought to be discountenanced. (Webster, 1783, 6)¹²

Note that his unpalatalized treatment of initial and medial stops in New England English is discussed in the sections on consonants in Part III and IV (Chapters 25 and 28 respectively). In his *Dissertations* (1789, 148), he adds,

On the other hand, the writers on the language have been silent upon this point, till within a few years; and Kenrick speaks of it as a *Metropolitan pronunciation*, supported by *certain mighty fine speakers* (cf. Kenrick, 1773, 32), which implies that the practice is modern, and proves it to be local, even in Great Britain.

The eradication of non-standard English in America and the imposition of a “correct” method of grammar and pronunciation is clearly a point on which Franklin and Webster stood in firm agreement, as well as the definition of a new national “norm.” This stands in total contradiction to Webster’s remarks about the “fruitlessness” of eliminating the “natural accent” used by the “bulk of the nation” which, from a sociolinguistic perspective, amounted to eradicating the paritary register from American English.

In passing, Webster’s detailed accounts of dialectal differences between the regions and individual states refutes Dillard’s hypothesis that American regional varieties do not emerge until the 19th century, through contacts with non-English speakers (Dillard, 1972, 1973, 1992; see Chapters 11 and 12 in Volume I for discussion).

To conclude this section, Webster’s appeal to follow the grammatical and phonological rules of the “bulk of speakers” does not necessarily hold in the sense that the majority of speakers in North America probably did deviate from those features of pronunciation and grammar that he believed to respect “rule and propriety.” In short, and to repeat, the model to which he adhered was his own.

11 And yet, in his 1828 *Dictionary of the American Language*, Webster proposes the spelling of *Chooseday* for “Tuesday”!

12 Here again, Webster is wrong, in the sense that the lack of palatalization, as is still the case today for words like “Tuesday” and “dew,” is characteristic of scattered areas of England such as in Norwich, the London area, Sussex and all of Devon (cf. Upton & Widdowson, 1996, maps 24 & 25). [tʃ] and [dʒ] are still the pronunciations of “Tuesday” and “dew” in large areas of the Southwest including the areas around Bristol, areas from which the majority of colonists heading for Virginia was sent after 1654. The unpalatalized forms were current near London, the point of departure for the first waves of Englishmen leaving for New England.

3. American Adherence to the London English Model

3.1 Webster American Dictionary: A Lone Voice in the Wilderness

We saw in Parts III and IV that Franklin's attitudes towards London English were far more nuanced than Webster's and Franklin may still have secretly preferred this English model, or at least aspects of it, to the one advocated by Webster. Put another way, Franklin and Webster agreed on nearly every point with respect to grammar and the lexicon, but not necessarily pronunciation. The question is whether Webster toned down his opinions regarding London English when they met in 1786 knowing Franklin's attachment to it or, on the contrary, did he vex Franklin (or vice versa) while discussing the London model. Finally, we wondered whether Franklin's attitudes towards London English might have changed since the Revolution. If Webster had expressed the extent to which he detested Sheridan and Walker's schemes which, in most respects, were not terribly distant from those proposed in his RMS, one wonders whether Franklin would have furnished Webster with all his notes and lead characters?

Thirty years after the publication of his RMS (1779) and twenty years after his 1789 *Dissertations on the English Language*, Webster's acknowledgement of Franklin influence can be seen again in the 1809 edition of his bestseller, *The American Spelling Book*, where he candidly asks a very valid question which had perplexed all orthoepists.

A perfect standard of pronunciation, in a living language, is not to be expected; and when the best English Dictionaries differ, from each other, in several hundred, probably a thousand words, where are we to seek for undisputed rules? and how can we arrive at perfect uniformity? (Webster, 1809, vi)

A few pages later, he once again advocates the idea of "one sound for one letter." However, like Sheridan (1762), we have already seen that he probably never had any intention of applying this rule, even before meeting Franklin in 1786. In the following passage, he explains his reasoning and repeats his rejection of an overly rigid linguistic and scientific approach of this kind (already expressed in his *Dissertations*) by stressing that languages are irregular.

In a perfect language, every simple sound would be expressed by a distinct character; and no character would have more than one sound. But languages are not thus perfect; and the English Language, in particular, is, in these respects, extremely irregular. (1809, 6)

The implication is that, because English is not a "perfect" language, no orthographic system, regardless of its scientific precision (including Franklin's

RMS), could possibly be applied successfully. But this is to forget that Franklin's very objective was to impose a "correct" model for illiterates and dialect speakers and, in this way, make their speech more acceptable to the upper classes. Franklin knew what he was talking about and had probably witnessed the humiliation of those around him in Boston, Philadelphia and London who were spurned on account of their accents (cf. Shorrocks' moving testimony of this for Bolton, Lancashire, 1998).

Recall Webster's rather contemptuous statement (cited in section 1.7) in his *Dissertations* condemning Franklin and other orthoepists' scientific attempts to modernize English spelling:

It was proposed, in most of these schemes, not merely to throw out superfluous and silent letters, but to introduce a number of new characters. Any attempt on such a plan must undoubtedly prove unsuccessful. *It is not to be expected that an orthography, perfectly regular and simple, such as would be formed by a * Synod of Grammarians on principles of science, will ever be substituted for that confused mode of spelling which is now established* (my italics). (1789, 394)

In the end, it appears that, from the beginning, Webster never had any faith in Franklin's orthoepistic principles and only gave lip service to the idea of a scientifically-based spelling system. As posited earlier, I fear he simply did not grasp the underlying logic of Franklin's phonological scheme.

3.2 American Fidelity to the London-Based Model

I have stated that the Americans maintained a deeper psychological and emotional attachment to the motherland than has been realized, and this despite the political and social antagonism that we have discussed previously. The idea of abandoning the cultural and linguistic traditions which bound them to Britain was a separate affair. This was particularly true at a time when advances in the sciences, literary references and intellectual developments were still overwhelmingly British and European.

Also of significance is the fact that the overwhelming majority of the 900,000 New England inhabitants were direct descendants of those English dissenters who had arrived from eastern, southwestern and Midland regions of England between 1620 and 1700 (cf. Chapters 11 and 12, Part II, Volume I). For this reason, the majority of educated New Englanders, and British Americans throughout the former colonies more generally, could simply not understand why, despite the political separation from Great Britain, the two nations should be separated by language, and even if the London model was innovative in many respects.

Simply put, during the first decades of the Republic and well into the 19th century, Webster's radical ideas regarding championing a national brand of American English pronunciation and even introducing Native American words

such as squaw, wigwam, tomahawk, etc. were branded as “American barbarisms” and staunchly opposed by the majority of literate American and intellectuals, who still clung tenaciously to the educated London English grammatical, lexical and pronunciation models.

In both England and America, the dictionary of choice was still Samuel Johnson’s 1755 *Dictionary of the English Language* which, in addition to being a dictionary, was also considered to be a work of literature. The prescriptive systems of pronunciation were based on the work of Thomas Sheridan (1761, 1762, 1780), William Kenrick (1773), Robert Nares (1784) and, in particular, John Walker (1791). For most Americans, Walker’s *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary* would become the linguistic reference *par excellence* during the first half of the 19th century.

Why was there so much resistance to Webster’s ideas in these quarters? In Chapter 14 (Part II, Volume I), I outlined the general feelings of self-deprecation that provincials felt (and still do in many nations and regions of Britain and North America) regarding their own regional English speech and the concept of linguistic “mimicry.” One example that was cited is the Scot, Sylvester Douglas, who spoke of his countrymen’s “vulgar Scotch jargon” and “the provincial dross” and the benefits of frequenting polite English society. Thomas Spence, from Northumberland, wrote in his *Giant-Killer or Anti-Lord* (1814), “Why should People be laughed at all their lives for betraying their vulgar education, when the Evil is so easily remedied. How ridiculous it is to hear People that can read saying Any Think; A Horange; Idear; Noar” (quoted in Beal, 1999, 9), pronunciations that his own family members probably used! Many Americans also viewed their own regional speech in the same self-denigrating light. In some quarters, both in America and English, “barbarisms” and “Americanisms” were synonymous. Having said this, the tendency was to associate these “vulgar” tendencies with vocabulary and grammar.

This explains the derision with which Webster’s proposals for a national “American” language model was met. For example, Warren Dutton, the chief editor of the *New England Palladium* in 1801, wrote this scathing critique of Webster’s project.

A language, arrived at its zenith, like ours, and copious and expressive in the extreme (i.e. British English), requires no introduction of new words... Colloquial barbarisms abound in all countries, but among no civilized peoples are they admitted with impunity into books... Now, in what can a Columbian dictionary¹³ differ from an English one, but in these barbarisms? Who are the Columbian authors who do not write in the English manner, except Noah Webster, Junior, Esq? The embryo dictionary then must either be a dictionary of pure English words, and in that case superfluous, as we already possess the admirable lexicon of Johnson,

13 That is, an “American” Dictionary.

or else must contain vulgar, provincial words, unauthorized by good writers [my italics] and in this case, must surely be the just object of ridicule and censure... If the Connecticut lexicographer considers the retaining of the English language as a badge of slavery, *let him not give us a Babylonish dialect in its stead, nor adopt at once the language of the aborigines... If he will persist, in spite of common sense, to furnish us with a dictionary, which we do not want...* I will furnish him with a title for it [my italics]. Let, then the projected volume of foul and unclean things bear his own Christian name, and be called NOAH'S ARK. (cited by Martin, 2019, 44)

Edward Everett (1794-1865), who among other activities was the president of Harvard University and Governor of Massachusetts, was another of Webster's critics:

We think the cases must be very rare, and present a very well admitted ambiguity, to authorize us, as Mr Webster proposes, to resort to principles of the English language, in defiance of the received English pronunciation. We also deny wholly the propriety of making a distinction between the American usage and the English usage, as such, and the setting up of a standard for each. (Ibid., 71)

The respected American philologist, John Pickering (1777-1846), a politician, jurist and member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in Cambridge Massachusetts, also criticized Webster's ideas, regarding the establishment of a national standard separate from England's as anathema. Like Franklin, he equated "Americanisms" with "barbarisms" and rejected the idea that they should be included in any dictionary. In 1816, John Pickering writes:

I expect to encounter the displeasure of our American reformers, who think we ought to throw off our native tongue as one of the badges of English servitude, and establish a new tongue for ourselves. The best scholars in our country treat such a scheme with derision. (Ibid., 59)

For Pickering, the English language "is common to ourselves and the illustrious writers and orators of our mother country" (ibid.). If nothing else, such statements illustrate the degree to which Americans' attachment to England's cultural and linguistic legacy was still intact even decades after the Revolution and only one year after another bloody war with Great Britain (i.e. the War of 1812-1814).

Looby (1984, 12-13) argues that, by the end of the 1760s, men like Franklin, Jefferson and Adams were in favour of establishing an American linguistic norm for the new Republic. If true, they would have supported Noah Webster's position. For the reasons presented in Parts III and IV, I have argued that Looby's position anachronistic and stems from his assumption that Franklin's RMS was based on "American," not "London English." It is for this reason he stated that the linguistic model proposed for America by Franklin was a new colonial variety divorced from standard London-English speech.

And it comes as no surprise that John Adams, who believed it was “not to be disputed that the form of government has an influence upon language,” should propose to Congress the creation of a “public institution for refining, correcting, improving, and ascertaining the English language.” Adams advised the Congress that it would “have a happy effect upon the union of the States to have a public standard for all persons in every part of the continent to appeal to, both the signification and pronunciation of the language.” (Looby, 1984, 12-13)

One can assume that Adams’ idea of creating an American Academy of language was inspired by the Académie française but there can be little doubt that this model was not to be anything else but English. In fact, we have seen that Webster himself sought to promote an older form of what he considered to be “pure” English English, that is, the variety of spoken in England prior to the 1730s, which he claimed had been corrupted by the Londoners and their “London dialect.” This too is erroneous, because that older model, which he must have heard on a daily basis among the older “New England gentlemen” he frequented, was of the Type C1/C2 variety that Franklin and the men of his generation spoke quite naturally.

Webster tried to enlist the support of the Professor of Rhetoric at Harvard, John Quincy Adams (later sixth President of the United States) for his new linguistic enterprise but he too tried to dissuade him from embarking on what he viewed as a fruitless mission. Adams adopted a more neutral stance.

A patriotic spirit will from a sense of duty encourage domestic manufactures, but to prescribe their use by LAW, and to prohibit the introduction of them from Great Britain, is at least of more questionable policy, and perhaps not quite so practicable... Alterations in spelling or of pronunciation upon the authority of one a single writer have an inevitable tendency to introduce confusion into a language... I am apprehensive that your example and authority may produce a similar inconvenience to the writers and speakers of English.... I would neither adopt or reject a mode of spelling or pronunciation either from deference or resistance to the English Court or State. (Cited in Martin, 2019, 50)

His views on the matter were unequivocal: “Americanisms” were “provincialisms” and, as such, “barbarisms.” As Adams put it, “Between vulgarism and propriety of speech some line must be drawn...” The model of propriety was to remain English.

3.3 The *American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828): Whittling Down the Reform

We are now reaching the end of this discussion of Franklin’s linguistic legacy but, before terminating, I would like to outline how Webster’s attempts to modify American orthography were further watered down by his detractors, including Chauncey Goodrich, his own son-in-law.

Driven by his Calvinist religious convictions, a branch of Protestantism to which he had converted in 1808, Webster was more than ever convinced that by implementing his plan he was also doing God's work. Webster did not relent and his views sparked a bitter confrontation between those, like him, who favoured an *autonomous* American model of English and his antagonists, that is, the majority of educated Americans who, like Franklin, supported a *heteronomous* approach based on the London Proto-RP standard.

The disagreement evolved into what has come to be known as the "Dictionary Wars,"¹⁴ the linguistic conflict which divided not only Englishmen and Americans until the present day but, throughout much of the 19th century, pitting Americans against each other.

As we have seen, although Webster may have been a good lexicographer, he was not a skilled phonetician and his spelling proposals contained impractical and inherent flaws which both appalled and annoyed his detractors, largely because it resembled the faulty spelling of semi-literates. As we have seen above, for this reason, his trial attempts in 1790 to promote his system were met with ridicule. In the face of this opposition, Webster adopted a strategy, as Franklin had advised, to introduce the spelling changes little by little.

We have already seen that Webster's 1806 *Compendious Dictionary*, consisting of five thousand words, introduced only a modicum of his and Franklin's initial spelling proposals. At the time, only Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language*, stood in his way and his *Compendious Dictionary* was already considered as a serious alternative to this English dictionary, now already fifty-one years old. Nevertheless, as previously stated, Samuel Johnson's dictionary and John Walker's *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary* remained the preferred models to follow in the minds of most literate Americans.

It was at this point that Webster decided he would administer the final *coup de grace* to his British and anglophile American opponents by publishing his *American Dictionary of the English Language*, a monumental work into which he poured his financial resources, even mortgaging his house to pay for the research and publishing costs. Recall that Webster's father had done the same to finance Noah's education. It was a work of immense passion and exhausting labour which took him twenty-five years to complete. During the final years of preparation, it led him to do research at the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* and the libraries of Oxford and Cambridge.

The end result was the publication, in 1828, of an enormous two-volume quarto dictionary complete with definitions, examples (very often in the form of Biblical citations), abundant etymologies (many of them faulty) and a

14 For a thorough account of this episode, see Peter Martin's excellent book entitled *Dictionary Wars* (2019), which served as one of my principle sources for this section.

pronunciation guide. It also contained many of his quirky (and often inconsistent) orthographic proposals, many of which even his supporters found intensely irritating. His dictionary contained 20,000 more entries than Johnson's 1755 edition and included the aforementioned modifications to English spelling. Of course, as usual, it contained blunt criticism of everything English, in particular Sheridan and Walker's proposals.

While this work is considered to be an admirable achievement on account of its great size, its cost was prohibitive for most Americans. Only 2,500 volumes were sold in America. Paradoxically, 3,000 were purchased in Great Britain where the more practical aspects of Webster's approach inspired British lexicographers to launch their own initiatives.

Nevertheless, a year before Webster's monumental two-volume *American Dictionary of the English Language* came out, he was beaten to the punch by a compatriot and fellow New Englander, Joseph Emerson Worcester, who served as the "reviewer" of the abridged American edition of *Samuel Johnson's English Dictionary, as Improved by Todd, and Abridged by Chalmers; with Walker's Pronouncing Dictionary Combined*. It was published in 1827 and a second edition came out in 1828.

Born in Bedford, New Hampshire, in 1784, Worcester was yet another American whose linguistic loyalty remained firmly in the English fold, and he never wavered in his convictions throughout his entire life. By all accounts, Worcester was an honest, shy and sincerely religious man who certainly had no personal vendetta against the irascible and prideful Webster. As one can imagine, however, the mere publication on American soil of Johnson's dictionary which, to rub salt in the wound, included John Walker's pronunciation guide, was enough to push Webster to the brink of apoplexy. This dictionary represented much of what he detested and against which he had fought for decades. Now, just as he was about to publish his own dictionary, a work which had taken him over twenty years of gruelling labour to complete, the critics were heaping lavish praise on his adversary's dictionary which, they suggested, should be proposed for use in the nation's schools.

This was a bitter pill to swallow, not only for the reasons just mentioned but because financially, Webster's huge *American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828) was far more costly than the abridged version of the Todd-Johnson dictionary, i.e. the equivalent of \$450 in modern currency (Martin, 2019, 72). It was then that the idea came to him to produce an abridged edition of his new dictionary that would be more competitive. At the age of seventy Webster, depressed, weary and strapped for cash, turned to his son-in-law, Chauncey Goodrich, for assistance.

3.3.1 Goodrich, the Trojan Horse

Goodrich, who had been a professor of rhetoric and theology at Yale, was not only a highly educated and knowledgeable scholar, he was also well-placed to assist Webster in editing and reducing his massive dictionary. Given its size, however, he needed assistance. Unbeknownst to Webster, however, Goodrich, after consulting with Webster's publisher, concluded that there was only one other man in North America who was qualified to undertake the job of editing and abridging Webster's dictionary. This was none other than Joseph Emerson Worcester. What followed was a succession of delicate, complex manoeuvres and negotiations which were to have dire consequences on the history of American lexicography, the ultimate result being the virtual elimination of any trace of Franklin's input and, especially, the pedagogical value of the orthographic reform.

Worcester initially refused to collaborate with Goodrich on several occasions on reasons of principle. After all, he was as much in favour of furthering the English models of grammar, spelling and pronunciation in America as Webster was in combating them. Goodrich and his publisher Converse then decided to travel to Cambridge (Boston) to meet Worcester and discuss the matter in person.

As it turned out, Goodrich and Worcester had far more in common than Worcester initially suspected. Both had the literary and philological skills necessary to complete the task but, far more important than that, Goodrich was also an ardent anglophile in matters of language and shared the same views as Worcester in this regard. Goodrich's own major 1,000+ page publication, entitled *Select British Eloquence*, on rhetoric and select speeches of the greatest British orators says it all. As Martin (2019, 97) states, Goodrich "taught his students out of a deep and natural appreciation and understanding of the elegance of traditional classical and British oratory and grammar. He had found in Worcester a kindred spirit." An offer of \$2,000 (\$50,000 in today's money) to undertake the project clinched the deal and the three men agreed to complete the project in one year.

Prior to this, Goodrich had Webster's full trust but when the latter discovered that his son-in-law and editor had gone behind his back to negotiate a collaboration to revise his beloved dictionary with the very man who had edited the Todd-Johnson dictionary, he felt thoroughly betrayed. Although he had little choice but to sign the contract, from that point on his relationship with his son-in-law and his publisher degenerated. Nevertheless, having said this, it is difficult to believe that Webster had not been aware of his son-in-law's proclivities regarding his linguistic predilections but, perhaps of more immediate importance, it is also true that Webster desperately needed funds to pay off his debts.

Worcester, as was his habit, worked faithfully and expertly with a view to

respecting Webster's ideas and proposals as closely as possible. However, well into the work, Worcester complained that the abridged edition was still far too long and that more needed to be cut out. As Martin (*ibid.*, 98) stresses, most problematical for Goodrich and Worcester was Webster's refusal to recognize the pronunciations of the leading authorities such as Johnson, Todd, Walker, Chalmers... Furthermore, the two collaborators rejected Webster's more extravagant spellings: *duce* for *deuce*, *nehbor* for *neighbor*, *nusance* for *nuisance*, *spreed* for *spread*, *turky* for *turkey*... (*ibid.*).

Worcester regularly sent long word lists to Goodrich with his own proposals for pronunciation which inevitably departed from Webster's... To his credit, Worcester insisted that the changes be approved by Webster himself and Worcester appears to have been more concerned with adding more pronunciations than eliminating Webster's (*ibid.*, 99). The solution that was found by Goodrich and Worcester was to include Webster's orthographic suggestions but to "degrade" them by presenting the word under its traditional orthographic form and including some but not all of Webster's proposed spellings. Having said this, Webster had agreed to a limited use of this policy in his 1828 edition, for example, the heading of DEUCE, n. A demon. [See Duse.] (cf. Webster, 1828, 564).

For one entire year, Worcester laboured diligently, completing his task in 1829 before the deadline. Goodrich travelled to Boston on several occasions during this time and the two men became fast friends. On his collaboration with Worcester, Goodrich later wrote that:

Mr. Worcester [sic] made no changes of a literary or any other kind, except under the direction of Dr. Webster and myself. He was exceedingly delicate on this point, sending on lists of some hundreds of words with queries for Dr. Webster, and Mr. Worcester acted accordingly. His abridging was performed almost wholly by erasure; but now and then he condensed definitions, or threw in connecting words of his own... I have always said, that Mr. Worcester's abridgement was *well made*. Everyone knows that the changes of orthography and pronunciation made by my direction (as Dr. Webster's representative) were highly advantageous. Some of his [Webster's] spelling & pronunciation were so obnoxious to the public that Dr. Webster's best friends feared greatly for their effect. There was danger that the large work, encumbered by these, would be considered as a book for the learned alone. It was the Octavo abridgement, *thus popularized* in orthography & pronunciation, which gave a decided favourable turn to the popular mind at this crisis. (Cited in Martin, 2019, 97-98).

In this 1829, abridged edition, Worcester and Goodridge went much further in limiting such phonetic spellings. Webster was devastated when he saw the final publication and decided to disown the entire octavo edition, claiming that it had been modified to such an extent that he no longer recognized it as his own.

3.3.2 Franklin's Waning Impact on Webster's Reform

At seventy-one years of age, Webster was physically and mentally exhausted after the efforts expended in publishing his *American Dictionary*. Furthermore, he was engaged in countering Lyman Cobb's blistering attacks, and now, confronting the growing challenge from Worcester and Goodrich to dilute spelling initiatives (especially Cobb, 1831).¹⁵ Most of all, without the necessary financial resources to continue the fight, he felt very alone. But fight on he did and, in a climate of disaccord and acrimony, Webster fired his publisher and set out to produce his own version of the abridgement.

During the decade that followed, Webster prepared his last major dictionary under the title of *A Dictionary of the English Language*, which was finally published in 1841. Webster was now eighty-three years old. The dictionary was more successful than the previous ones and, paradoxically, sold very well in Britain. It is to this edition that Alexander Ellis (1869, 1063-1064) refers in his own remarks on Webster's speech. It seems ironic that Webster, the resolute enemy of English aristocracy actually offered a dedicated copy of his dictionary to Queen Victoria.

In the meantime, however, Goodrich, playing on Webster's sense of loyalty to his daughter, managed to have Webster grant him the sole copyright for any subsequent editions. Webster reluctantly agreed. Indefatigable until the end, Webster's health finally gave out and, in 1843, he passed away. Surrounded by his family his last words are said to have been "I love my country...".

Now that Goodrich had obtained the exclusive copyrights to Webster's work, he and his successors were now free to eliminate and temper the most extravagant spelling changes and faulty etymologies that Webster had introduced in the successive editions of his previous dictionaries and spellers.

A year after Webster's death, Goodrich signed a deal with Charles and George Merriam, who purchased the rights to Webster's dictionary. Together, with Goodrich as chief editor, they published the 1847 Goodrich-Merriam edition. An expanded and improved edition was published (114,000 words) in 1864 under the original 1828 title, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*. This edition tipped the balance against Worcester and henceforth marked the decline in popularity of Worcester's dictionaries. As a consequence, the English

15 Lyman Cobb, a New Yorker of humble origins, was a long-time opponent of Webster's vision for the English language in America. In 1821, he published *A Just Standard for Pronouncing the English Language Containing the Rudiments of the English Language* in 1821 which relied heavily on Walker. A second edition followed in 1825. In retaliation for the acrimonious criticisms of his views by Webster, Cobb retaliated in 1831 with a fifty-six-page pamphlet entitled *A Critical Review of the Orthography of Dr. Webster's Series of Books*, in which he identified 720 words which, he claimed, demonstrated the contradictions and inconsistencies of Webster's spelling reform that he had introduced since 1783.

lexicographical and orthographic tradition that he had defended so fervently weakened accordingly. Conversely, however, the 1864 Webster edition once again met with considerable success in Great Britain winning the praise of none other than Sir James Murray, editor of the monumental *Oxford English Dictionary* and also Edward B. Tylor, often considered the father of cultural anthropology, who qualified it as “certainly the best practical English dictionary extant” (quoted in Martin, 2019, 286).

By the end of the 19th century, the battle between the concept of a national American English-language dictionary had swung in Webster’s favour and the idea of an international, English-centred linguistic system based on educated London English was essentially over, but only in the United States. The English-speaking British Commonwealth nations continued to respect the older heteronomous position that Franklin had advocated, viewing RP and standard English grammar as their model. With these successive editions of Webster’s dictionary, however, complete with the modifications and improvements that had accompanied it, gradually, by the end of the 19th century, *An American Dictionary of the English Language* came to be accepted as the most prestigious and respected dictionary in America. The result was the final codification of American orthography as we know it today.

4. A 20th-Century Denouement

It might come as a surprise that, despite the impression given in the last paragraph, the debate regarding which model of pronunciation should be considered the most appropriate for educated American speakers, that is, RP English or “General American,” continued into the 20th century.

Parts III and IV demonstrated that, in a number of important respects, GA has more in common with earlier Proto-RP English than modern RP does and it is for this reason that I consider that GA, when viewed from a broad systemic perspective, marks a stage in the continuity in the development of normalized English pronunciation that can be roughly situated diachronically at stage equivalent to an evolved version of Mazarin’s Type D variety (post 1800), with the retention of postvocalic /r/, /ou/ for RP /əv/, /v:/ for *Taught* words (rather than RP /ɔ:/), and /æ/ rather than /ɑ:/ in words such as *half, calm, pass, path, enhance*, etc.

Since the 18th century, this passionate and highly emotional debate regarding language propriety has been intimately tied to issues related to social class as well as to national identity, in particular the clash of American and English nationalism. This is still the case today with Americans often associating the RP accent with a disparitary register closely associated with the English upper classes. Ironically perhaps, while many Americans secretly admire the RP accent in the mouths of Englishmen, an American adopting such an RP accent would be

deemed to be absurdly pretentious and even ridiculous.

The drift away from the proto-RP London-English model was partially encouraged by Webster's dictionaries but not entirely. An additional and important development was the shift in economic power, during the first half of the 20th century, from the East Coast cities of Boston, New York and Philadelphia to the Midwestern and Western cities of Chicago, Detroit, St Louis, Los Angeles, San Francisco, regions where most Americans spoke a surprisingly uniform variety of English which has come to be most associated with the General American accent. The English spoken in the northern half of Ohio, and the Upper Midwest more generally, are often considered to be most representative of this model. I am not in total agreement with this assessment.

Growing American national pride and outright chauvinism resulting from the inexorable rise of the United States as a military and economic powerhouse during the last decades of the 19th century, and especially following World War I, led to renewed popular support for Webster's nationalist, linguistic agenda, but not at all in the way he originally intended. Viewed from this angle, it comes as no surprise that H. L. Mencken's jingoistic *The American Language* should have been published in 1919. As the title indicates, the suggestion is that American English is a separate "language" from British English. Mencken picks up on many of the arguments repeated ad infinitum by Noah Webster in his successive dictionaries and spellers but, most especially, he stresses the creativity, spontaneity and idiomatic richness and the vitality of the American English vernacular. He compares this to what he portrays as the stiff, unimaginative English formal standard. Interestingly, the distinction he draws here between the two varieties are reflective of the sociolinguistic stereotypes of both nations (Chapters 11 and 12), the "American language" being associated with the paritary registers and "American slang," as opposed to the pompous, Latinate, disparitary English register. Mencken glossed over the fact that literary American English was of the same disparitary type.

From a diachronic perspective, George Krapp's *The English Language in America* (1925) is an infinitely more serious work which, despite the fact that it is nearly one hundred years old and dated in many respects, still offers the most comprehensive, scientific view of early American English historical phonology that has been undertaken to date (cf. Montgomery, 2003, 15). Krapp's book has been interpreted to be a rebuttal of Mencken's thesis in that it highlights the deep English roots of both the paritary and disparitary registers of American English. It is perhaps not a surprise that scholars ceased studying origins of American English after the 1940s, Charles Wise's article being the last serious study of Franklin's RMS of which I am aware.

As I have argued in this book the obvious continuity between southern English varieties of English and American varieties, both standard and non-

standard, throughout the colonial period to the present day. This is supported by large body of evidence from the 17th- and 18th-century American and British sources (Part III).

At another level, this entire discussion demonstrates the extent to which ideology, national identity and sociolinguistic considerations have been intertwined and confused since the American Revolution. My objective here has been to simply point out that many educated Americans continued to adhere to the British model of pronunciation long after Worcester's influence began to wane. The English phonetician, Harold Palmer, attested that many university-educated Americans spoke what he considered to be perfect RP English. In the preface to his *A Dictionary of English Pronunciation with American Variants* (1926), he states that upon meeting American nationals for the first time in Japan, he found it hard to believe, to their great annoyance, that they were not Englishmen who had only been recently naturalized as American citizens.¹⁶

Some of my [English] phonetician friends even expressed the view that to advocate the adoption of British pronunciation in the United States would be a point of impertinence about equal to advocating the adoption of the British flag in the United States.

Coming to Japan four years ago, and thereby coming into very close contact with the not inconsiderable American population here, I discovered certain disconcerting facts concerning this matter of pronunciation. I would be engaged in conversation with an English-speaking person, and eventually enquire from what part of England he hailed.

The Stranger: Oh, I'm American.

Myself: Really? Naturalized?

The Stranger: Oh no, native born. A hundred per cent American.

Myself [*too astonished to be tactful*]: But, but, you . . . well . . . you pronounce English just as if you were English!

The Stranger [*too annoyed to be gentle*]: Well, hang it all, man, I hope you don't suppose that all Americans are backwoodsmen or raw country hayseeds comparable to the yokels of Sussex or Yorkshire!

That sort of conversation, repeated in modified form with other Americans, made me realize that the people who grow red and angry at the mention or the assumption of American pronunciation are the Americans themselves. Not all, of course, but still, a good many.

Worthy of note is the reference to Sussex and Yorkshire "yokels," yet another revealing example of linguistic elitism and condescension for regional varieties, even by Americans.

Palmer then goes on to write the following:

16 I thank my friend and colleague, Professor Jean-Louis Duchet, Université de Poitiers, for having provided me with a copy of this dictionary.

I receive publications and pamphlets from America, ay, and letters too, all assuring me that there is no such thing as Standard American Pronunciation, or, worse, that what many call “American Pronunciation” is synonymous with “Amurrican Pronunciation” in other terms, the “Uneducated Pronunciation of America” or “Cockney American.” I am assured that there is only one pronunciation that is ever worth mentioning or thinking about, and that is neither British nor American nor Scottish nor Slocum-in-the-Hole pronunciation, but simply “Good Pronunciation,” the same for America as for the British Isles and Empire.

Then comes Professor Wyld, who states (backing up his statements with incontrovertible evidence) that what many have termed “Southern English” or “British English” has a name but no local habitation, and the name is “Received Standard,” the same for England (South or North) as for America (East, Canada, West or Southern States).¹⁷

Again, this demonstrates that, as late as 1926, an English phonetician, trained in IPA transcription, found it difficult to distinguish between the speech of educated Americans and educated RP English speakers. Even if we allow for a degree of exaggeration here, this anecdote is quite telling and exposes how the linguistic bonds to London English remained in vogue, decades after Worcester’s death.

Daniel Jones, upon his visit to the United States in 1925, confirms the same tendency among some East Coast Americans:

Even in the United State, where so many varieties of pronunciation are to be heard, it seems that this pronunciation (i.e. RP) is fairly universally understood without difficulty – a curious fact considering that American speech is not by any means always understood in England. When I was in America in 1925, several American teachers (*mostly from New York and the North-Eastern part of the United States* (my italics), informed me, somewhat to my surprise, that RP or RP with slight modifications, would be a suitable standard for teaching in American schools. This view is probably no longer held. In any case, I cannot think that any attempt to introduce this pronunciation into America is likely to meet with success. (Jones, 1967, xviii)

When Jones states that “American speech is not by any means always understood in England,” it is difficult to imagine that a linguist of his level of learning is not purposely exaggerating the sociolinguistic facts. He is, perhaps purposely, confusing “American speech” with “American vernacular speech.” It would be hard to imagine educated GA standard speakers or, for that matter, Palmer’s American interlocutors, having difficulty being misunderstood by English speakers (unless Jones was taking into account the millions of broad English dialect speakers of his generation). Recall that RP is only spoken today by approximately 3% of the British population (Trudgill, 1974, 3).

Be that as it may, except for dying castes of self-styled elites, such as the so-

17 I thank my friend and colleague, Professor Jean-Louis Duchet of the Université de Poitiers for having furnished me with a digitized copy of Palmer’s dictionary.

called Boston brahmins or the Virginia bluebloods and suchlike, by the second half of the 20th century, American educators had definitively abandoned any attempts to promote an RP accent.¹⁸

In conclusion, one can say that, although it was clearly Franklin who inspired Webster to pursue his efforts to modernize English orthography, it is also equally certain that Franklin would have been appalled to see the dismal outcome of his plan for a spelling reform, not to mention the orthographic confusion that Webster's endeavours have since provoked in the minds of British and American spellers, both young and old.¹⁹ In the end, one wonders whether the effort was worth it.

Regardless, if Webster is now credited with being the father of American orthography, for better or for worse, it would be fitting to consider Franklin as its unwilling godfather.

And heere is ended Frankeleyns Tale

18 Traces of this former American adherence to the English RP model can be heard quite clearly in the accents of American dignitaries born in the late 19th century. Among them are Anne Mansfield Sullivan (1866-1936, Helen Keller's teacher), Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962, American First lady) and Averill Harriman (1891-1986, US Undersecretary of State) and, more recently, William Buckley (1925-2008) and Gore Vidal (1925-2012). All have accents that could be qualified as "near RP." Buckley and Vidal were American political pundits and television commentators. Buckley founded the conservative review, the *National Review*. Vidal championed liberal causes (in the American sense of the word) and was also a respected playwright. Recall that RP /əʊ/ in *Goat* words was pronounced still /ou/ in the first 1917 edition of Daniel Jones' *English Pronouncing Dictionary*.

For video examples, see Anne Mansfield Sullivan:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XdTUSignq7Y>; Eleanor Roosevelt's Human Rights speech, 1951: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yzakVOdh6k>; Averell Harriman's press conference on the nuclear test ban treaty: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CUt3IdvPmTI>; Gore Vidal and William Buckley: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vgT7Wr7Nkc>.

19 How often do we hear young students (foreign and domestic) asking, "Should it be written spelled or spelt? grey or gray? worshipping or worshiping? woollen or woolen...?"

Synopsis and General Conclusions

Because of the complexity of the data and length of these two volumes, I have added a synopsis of the key topics and issues that have been discussed as well as a summary of some of the major findings and conclusions.

In the General Introduction, I wrote that the underlying theme uniting this study, at both the social and sociolinguistic levels, is an ancient belief system known as the Great Chain of Being that was founded on the idea that the universe is structured along a vertical axis with superior beings, both spiritual and physical, ruling over categories of lesser beings, human and non-human. God Himself¹ is at the summit of this hierarchy and it is He who allows the higher categories of men and women to exercise authority over the inferior strata of humanity.

From the early Middle Ages to the 18th century and, to some extent to our day, it was believed that any challenge to this hierarchy would not only have had catastrophic effects on the stability of the entire social order but, even worse, would be a violation of God's laws (cf. Chapter 1, Volume I).

Directly tied to this hierarchy was a parallel sociolinguistic hierarchy with a small ruling class speaking a highly prestigious acrolect, followed by a mesolectal-speaking merchant class and, finally, at the bottom of the heap, an inferior class of peasants speaking stigmatized basilects (Chapters 10-12, Part II, Volume I). In keeping with Ferguson's definition of "diglossia" (Ferguson, 1959, see the Glossary), his conception of "high" and "low languages," we read a passage written by Robert of Gloucester, who lived in an age when this concept was very much a part of the social order of humanity. He writes at a time following the conquest of England when the "heie men" were speakers of Anglo-Norman French and when "lowe men" were speakers of Middle English basilects (cf. Chapter 10 for contextualization). The ecclesiastical class had been taken over by the Anglo-Norman French, the consequence being that the native Anglo-Saxon clergy were largely excluded from positions of power within the Church.

In the context of this discussion, I demonstrated that the first real challenges to the concept of the Great Chain of Being in England occurred during the 14th

1 I leave it up to the reader to determine questions of gender in matters of religion. Out of convention, I have adopted for the traditional approach.

century, involving an alliance of “lowe men” led by Lollard priests. In this discussion, I explained that among these priests were men who had suffered abuse at the hands of the aristocracy and who were seeking retribution and to improve the lot of the poorest, most destitute elements of society. In their sermons, the Lollard priests communicated a simple religious message to the common people of England, but also a highly radical political one, namely, that the French-speaking aristocrats that ruled over them, the bilingual French and Latin-speaking ecclesiastics, and the English-speaking tillers of the soil, were all the children of Adam and Eve. As such, they were all equals in the eyes of God (cf. Chapters 1 and 10).

There was also a linguistic counterpart to this challenge, the objective being to enable the English-speaking peasantry to explore their Christian faith in greater depth through the medium of English. To accomplish this, the Catechism (1357) and the Bible (1381) were translated into an elevated register of Middle English. Henceforth, the sermons were to be delivered in the English language. For the first time since the Anglo-Saxon defeat at Hastings (1066), the English-speaking people now had a formal liturgical linguistic model.

The fact that English was once again considered a language that was worthy enough to communicate God’s word raised its status considerably, from a “low” language to a “high” language (Ferguson, *ibid.*) that was the equal of French and Latin, at least in the minds of the English. Even though Wat Tyler’s Peasant Revolt of 1381 ended disastrously and was put down with terrible brutality (along with many other peasant revolts that followed), the seeds of this social, religious and, ultimately, political contestation had been planted, and these issues were now a mainstay in the minds of the common people. From a religious perspective, this movement was a direct challenge to the legitimacy of the premises on which the Great Chain of Being had been founded.

Although the Lollard movement was a national one, we saw that it was most deeply rooted in an area stretching from Kent to East Anglia. The point here is that, two centuries later, this same region became the bastion of a sect of radical Protestants known as the Puritans. For the reasons cited in Chapters 1 and 10, the members of this religious sect rejected the concept of the Divine Right of Kings, an ideology founded on an extreme interpretation of the Great Chain of Being. It was fully espoused by King Charles I of England and, a century later, by his nephew (by marriage), King Louis XIV of France. Especially galling to the non-Anglicans was the fact that Charles was both the king of England as well as the head of the “established” Anglican Church² to which all religious sects were obliged to tithe. He was detested by radicals on account of the absolute

2 Hence the phrasing of the first Amendment to the US Constitution (the American Bill of Rights), that states “Congress shall make no law respecting an *establishment* of religion”...

power he exercised over his subjects, including the authority of life and death, the right to confiscate property, to unilaterally impose taxes, etc. At the forefront of this confrontation were the Puritans and other radical dissident sects. These and other issues led to the bloody English Civil War (1642-1651) and, inevitably, to the Glorious Revolution (1688). These events directly fashioned Franklin's thinking and that of his generation. The causes for the American Revolution, barely a hundred years later, are to be found in these 17th-century historical, religious and political struggles.

What may initially appear to the reader as a meandering historical review is, in fact, central to our understanding of not only the sociohistorical ramifications of this story, but also the sociolinguistic dimension of these events and their effects on the development of the English language in both England and America.

In Chapters 1 and 10, I signalled that it was these same Puritans and like-minded dissidents, Franklin's maternal and paternal families, who emigrated to the Massachusetts Colony throughout the 17th century where they founded their "New Jerusalem," a theocracy where the law of the people was to be that of scripture. Allegiance to any worldly king was thus very much secondary to their loyalty to God. Simplicity in dress and modesty in behaviour, but also an individual quest for religious truth through literacy and learning, were hallmarks of the dissenting faith that was established in 17th-century Massachusetts and New England more generally.

Franklin was born in Boston in 1706 in this very rigid Puritan, dissident, radical culture. The point of this contextualization was to demonstrate that this was the source of his religious, social and political resistance to the abuses of an unjust and autocratic monarch. This was very much a family tradition and it is thus not by accident that Franklin begins his *Autobiography* with an outline of his family's English roots. With their roots in Ecton, Northamptonshire on his father's side and in Norfolk on his mother's, Franklin begins his *Autobiography* by stressing their humble social origins. He emphasizes their moral rectitude, their native "ingeniousness" as well as their devotion to public service, qualities that he attributes to his father and which, he indirectly imputes to himself (Chapters 2 and 3). Franklin is particularly proud of his family's literacy and intellectual acumen, pointing out that, as early as the 1550s, his great-grandfather possessed his own personal Bible (possibly the Matthew Bible). Merely possessing such a Bible during the reign of the Catholic Queen "Bloody Mary" (1550s) placed his family's life at risk. Contesting royal authority was thus part of a long family tradition. He clearly viewed this as a sign of moral integrity.

For him, the value of reading and education is central to the well-being of the local community (i.e. the commonwealth) and he states himself that he did not remember a time when he could not read. Recall that the Massachusetts legislature passed the very first universal education law in 1642 and in 1647 (the

“Old Deluder Satan” Law), requiring all individuals, regardless of social class (freemen, indentured servant or slaves) or sex, to read and write. Those who did not adhere were fined.

My argument was that, far more than any other colony, the Massachusettsans and New Englanders more generally, kept the flame of resistance alive against the abuses of the monarchy and its allies. Thanks to the geographic distance between them and the motherland, they were thus far more wary of the Crown’s religious and political excesses and infractions, and far freer to express their sentiments than their kinsmen back in England, whose rights were slowly whittled away during the reigns of George II and George III.

Although he came to reject many fundamental aspects of his parents’ Presbyterian faith and, by the age of fifteen, converted to Deism (Chapters 2 and 4), he never completely rejected either belief and, as he explains himself in his *Autobiography*, the book that most influenced his personal philosophy and conduct in life was written by Cotton Mather, entitled *Bonifacius: Essays to Do Good* (1710) which Franklin had read as a child, along with all his father’s books on religion, including the treatises on *Polemic Divinity*.

Mather’s *Essays* were the foundation for Franklin’s personal code of moral ethics, which he devised and expressed in his *Art of Virtue* (1726) (cf. Chapter 4). These were principles to which he remained faithful throughout his life. I see this treatise as being the source of all his philanthropic endeavours, including his RMS, and his core belief being that doing practical good works to improve the lives of our fellow citizens is what is most pleasing to Providence (Chapters 2, 4 and 5).

I classified these altruistic activities in three categories. The first implemented commonsensical ideas such as paving the streets of Philadelphia or his improved design of streetlamps to allow people to walk safely at night and, along the same lines, his proposal to Dr. John Fothergill to hire professional street sweepers in London. His famous “Franklin stove” offered an affordable and efficient heating system for thousands of families, not to mention his bifocal glasses design, which underlies our progressive lenses today.

The foundation of the Philadelphia fire department (the Union Fire Company) and constabulary, not to mention the first public hospital (in which the needy would be treated for free) are among his other major practical (joint) contributions.

Finally, his groundbreaking scientific experiments on electricity³ brought him international fame and were to have so many positive far-reaching consequences in improving the quality of the lives of millions. I argued that, like

3 Thanks to his “lightning rod,” countless fires were prevented that had previously devastated entire neighbourhoods and towns.

Einstein who once stated “I want to know God’s thoughts, the rest are details,” Franklin also believed that understanding the scientific laws of nature (i.e. natural philosophy) was the closest that any man could come to understanding the “Supreme Being” himself.

The second category of philanthropic designs was devoted to promoting projects which would assist the common people to gain access to knowledge, knowledge being the only way to liberate the common man from his inferior social position. In particular, thanks to his father and uncle’s encouragement, he realized very early during his childhood that obtaining a sound education and mastering standard English grammar, as well as the art of rhetoric, were the keys to obtaining social and economic advancement.

This can also be seen to be another challenge to the social hierarchy. Paradoxically, perhaps, it was from his own inferior social class that he struggled to escape and, throughout his *Autobiography* and in his correspondence, one observes his obsessive ambition, and obvious satisfaction when he succeeded, to gain the acceptance and respect of his social superiors. Paradoxically, perhaps, one observes his absolute contempt for and rejection of the broad, stigmatized dialectal varieties of English he heard around him in Boston and in England, which both he (and Webster) branded as “ridiculous.” The source of his prescriptive vision of language (and behaviour and manners) was “mimicry” of the dominant social classes, a phenomenon explained in Chapter 14 (Part II, Volume I). Mimicry of standard English was, in this sense, simply an extension of the imitation of the behavioural codes of the social elites.

Among the first of his altruistic endeavours in the domain of public education was his creation of the first lending library, a revolutionary idea which spread like wildfire throughout the colonies. Thanks to these libraries, he proudly boasted that America probably had the best educated population in the world. He was also the founder of the Philosophical Society in 1743 (now the American Philosophical Society), the objective of which was to encourage the exchange of ideas among the literary, philosophical and scientific community.

In a similar vein, he imagined that his Philadelphia Academy (1749)⁴ would offer not only a solid liberal arts education, but would also include an “English School” in which standard English grammar, “correct” pronunciation and rhetoric would be taught as formal academic disciplines alongside Latin and Greek.

Although Franklin did not put the scheme for his *Reformed Mode of Spelling* on paper until the summer of 1768, I am convinced that he had imagined the basic essentials of his new orthographic system decades earlier, probably when

4 Recall that the first classes were taught in the same building which Franklin had constructed to allow preachers of all denominations and faiths to give their sermons.

he was a printer's apprentice. I also suggested that Franklin almost certainly imagined that his simplified RMS orthographic system would be applied in this "English School" and, he probably hoped, in other similar schools throughout the Empire.

In a letter entitled "Observations Relative to the Intentions of the Original Founders of the Academy in Philadelphia," written in June 1789, less than a year before his death, Franklin railed against the trustees for not having instituted this school. This alone demonstrates how seriously he believed in this project. As strange as it may appear today, the teaching of English as an independent academic discipline was a new concept at the time and, as he explains in his *Autobiography*, he was inspired by John Locke who believed that teaching standard English to young students was essential because, otherwise, *young gentlemen would run the real risk of being mistaken for members of the underclasses*. This fear is very much present in some of Franklin's writings.⁵ In this sense, I take Franklin's proto-phonemic RMS to be a precursor to the RP model that was imposed during the 19th century as the only acceptable model for use in the great public schools of England. Simply put, Franklin was an English-American prescriptivist with a penchant for pedantic and fanciful turns of phrase. We have seen in his *Poor Richard's Almanack* that he also was able to code-switch and adopt paritary registers, particularly when conveying humour to his readers.

The third manifestation of Franklin's commitment to "doing good" was his dedication to public service and his defence of the colonies from the Crown's abuses of power (Chapters 6-9). It is perhaps for this role that he is best known. We see that, from the time he was a young man, and like many of his contemporaries, Franklin saw himself as an Englishman living in the North American colonies. In this sense, he remained totally convinced that the British Empire's future greatness lay in America.

I argued that the tensions between the colonies and the royal authorities were first sparked by the consequences of King George's War (1744-1748) and the so-called "French and Indian War" (1754-1760) between France and Great Britain over the control of North America (Chapters 6-9). In particular, I went into considerable detail describing Franklin's efforts to mobilize a united colonial militia army (under British military command) to fight the French and their Native American allies. His plans were first outlined in his essay entitled "Plain Truth" (1747). In 1754, as a newly elected member of the Pennsylvania Assembly, Franklin attempted, unsuccessfully, to enact his "Albany Plan," a strategy which

5 For instance, when he made his first Atlantic crossing to England in 1725 at the age of nineteen, upon boarding the ship, he and his friend James Ralph feared being taken for "ordinary" passengers, until they were finally invited among the gentlemen on board. Franklin seems to see no contradiction in such elitist behaviour.

he firmly believed would have allowed the Americans to defeat their enemies without the help of the British army. Franklin saw the royal authority's rejection of his plan and the unilateral decision to dispatch professional British troops to America to fight the French as the root cause of the Revolution.

The different and contrary reasons of dislike to my plan (i.e. Albany Plan) makes me suspect that it was really the true medium; and I am still of opinion it would have been happy for both sides of the water if it had been adopted. The colonies, so united, would have been sufficiently strong to have defended themselves; there would then have been no need of troops from England; *of course, the subsequent pretense for taxing America, and the bloody contest it occasioned, would have been avoided. But such mistakes are not new; history is full of the errors of states and princes* (my italics). (BF, pp. 130-131)

During the entire period he served as a colonial agent in London (1758-1775), Franklin played a pivotal role in the negotiations with Parliament and the King's Privy Council, trying vainly to convince them that the American colonies stood to become an economic but also demographic powerhouse (Franklin, 1751) which would ensure the absolute dominance of the British Empire over the rest of the world. Until the very eve of the American Revolution, Franklin remained an unabashedly fervent British patriot, a reality which is rarely emphasized in either England or America.

Indeed, prior to the Revolution, if one had asked Franklin whether he felt more "American" or "English" I believe it would have been like asking a Devonshire or Yorkshire person today whether they feel "English." In his mind, being "American" certainly had a cultural dimension but, in many respects, Americanness had an even stronger political dimension that was tied to his idealized interpretation of "Whiggism." For Franklin and his fellow Whigs, both in America and in Britain, they felt themselves to be the inheritors of the political and social advances secured during the Glorious Revolution and, more specifically, that had been encapsulated in the English Bill of Rights (1689), a document which we saw later served as a blueprint for the American Bill of Rights (1791), passages of which are borrowed word-for-word.

Many English Whigs, not least among them, William Pitt (Lord Chatham), former Prime Minister of England, considered that the Americans were not only fellow countrymen but also "freemen." Pitt literally stood beside Franklin and defended him before the House of Lords when he uttered the following words, words which summarize the themes on which the future American Republic was to be based:

The same spirit which called all England on its legs, and by the Bill of Rights vindicated the English constitution: the same spirit which established the great, fundamental, essential maxim of your liberties, *that no subject of England shall be taxed but by his own consent*. This glorious spirit of Whiggism animates three

millions in America; who prefer poverty with liberty to gilded chains and sordid affluence; and who will die in defence of their rights as men, as freemen. (Quoted in Ryerson, 2018, 363-364)

Seen from this perspective, I view what is now known as the “American Revolution” to be a sequel to the Glorious Revolution. Indeed, the American Revolution was fought over many of the same issues that had sparked the English Civil War in 1642: unfair taxes, the Crown’s abuse of human rights and repression of religious freedom in addition to a host of other complaints... It is in this context that one can best understand the motivations of those who sought to defend the old social order. It is for this reason I cited the verses of Alexander Pope’s “An Essay on Man” (1732-1733) to conclude Chapter 1.

Vast chain of being! which from God began...
 From Nature’s chain whatever link you strike,
 Tenth or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.
 And, if each system in gradation roll
 Alike essential to the amazing whole,
 The least confusion but in one, not all
 That system only, but the whole must fall...
 All this dread order break—for whom? for thee?
 Vile worm!—Oh, madness! pride! impiety!

From the point of view of the monarchy and its Tory allies, those Americans who dared challenge the king’s authority were in fact the “vile worms” referred to here by Pope, Franklin chief among them.

One of the questions I sought to answer was whether Franklin’s public shaming at the hands of the King’s allies in London in 1774 and in 1775, combined with the bloody war of Independence against Britain, might not have pushed him not only to reject his English heritage of which he had been so proud but also swayed him to rethink his anglophile ideas about linguistic propriety as expressed in his RMS?

To conclude, I never found the slightest shred of evidence suggesting that he had changed his mind about cultivating London English as the model of pronunciation for the American people.

Provincials: Social and Linguistic Insecurity

One of the hypotheses proposed in Part II (Volume I) was that Franklin, as a provincial, suffered not only from a sense of social inferiority but also linguistic insecurity. The second half of Chapter 14 explores this essential sociolinguistic question. For instance, what were the underlying reasons men such Buchanan (a Scot), Spence (a Northumberland man), Douglas (a Scot), Sheridan (an Irishman) and Franklin (a Bostonian) promoted the linguistic model of London courtesans

and the London stage as best they could, the speech of the very people who expressed such blatant condescension for the rural and urban working classes of their regions and nations?

I asked, under such conditions, why on earth would they adopt such a submissive position? The answer stems from a phenomenon referred to above called “mimicry” and which, in her study of the language of African slaves in Jamaica, Andrea Sand defines as “the imitation of the master,” “behaviour that was largely smiled upon and cultivated by the white colonial middle class” (Sand, 2000, 43). Motivated by a catastrophically negative image of self and a desire to gain acceptance by those controlling their lives, I argued that the British labouring classes in both Great Britain and North America adopted similar strategies, especially those with social and economic ambitions such as Franklin. I stressed that this phenomenon of “mimicry” is the expression of a kind of sociolinguistic Stockholm syndrome spurred by the powerful and often desperate desire of the underclasses to gain the acceptance and approval of their social superiors.

Their subservient attitude and their integration and tolerance of these disdainful views of their own people was directly tied, as we have seen, to the negative views regarding their speech (cf. Chapter 10). This is obvious in the writings of these northern English and Scottish intellectuals who readily present their own idioms in an amazingly derogatory light. In his *The Giant-Killer*, Spence asks “Why should People be laughed at all their lives for *betraying their vulgar education*, when *the Evil* is so easily remedied (i.e. to speak like the masters).” He then adds, “*How ridiculous it is to hear People that can read saying Any Think; A Horange; Idear; Noar*” (my italics) (Beal, 1999). Likewise, Sylvester Douglas speaks approvingly of those of his fellow countrymen who have succeeded in shedding their native Scots speech and “whose language has already been in a great degree refined *from the provincial dross*, by frequenting English company, and studying the great masters of the English tongue in their writings” (ibid.). In both cases, the contempt of self that is revealed in these comments suggests that Spence and Douglas would have been ashamed of their own parents and certain family members who had to have spoken like the “provincial dross” they condemn.

In a footnote in Franklin’s RMS, Vaughan comments that Franklin had told him that the Americans had difficulty “to learn the proper sound of words from want of public examples.” Here I feel quite certain he was, in particular, referring to polysyllabic Latinate vocabulary. The main difficulty stemmed from not knowing which syllable to stress. Looby also picked up on Franklin’s insecurity:

The inevitable result of this would have been that when Franklin arrived in the British capital as a young printer’s apprentice, with a vocabulary largely acquired

from reading, his speech would have immediately betrayed him as a provincial, and what is worse, a provincial with pretensions to sophisticated diction – pretensions which his abnormal pronunciations tended to undercut. We can imagine the mortification he felt as a young man whose ambition was to enter the society of the learned and the powerful. (Looby, 1984, 5)

Franklin's linguistic subservience to the educated English standard is clearly expressed in a letter to Hume (1760) which I have highlighted for special emphasis. It is one of the key passages demonstrating his allegiance to London English.

I thank you for your friendly admonition relating to some unusual words in the pamphlet. It will be of service to me. The "pejorate," and the "colonize," *since they are not in common use here, I give up as bad...* ***But I hope, with you, that we shall always in America make the best English of this Island our standard, and I believe it will be so.***

One of the key examples of his insecurity is found in Franklin's letter to Polly Stevenson (July 20, 1768) in which he asked for her assistance in identifying those RMS characters which she felt did not "perfectly" correspond to her own "English" pronunciation.

I wish you to consider this Alphabet, and ***give me Instances of such English words and Sounds as you may think cannot perfectly be expressed by it. I am persuaded it may be completed by your help*** (my italics).

Finally, the ultimate proof of what has been said comes in Franklin's *Autobiography*, which he wrote when he was already an old man and in which he states that "I was but a bad speaker, never eloquent, subject to much hesitation in my choice of words, hardly correct in language, and yet I generally carried my points."⁶

Without even having explored the linguistic data presented in Part IV, Chapters 25-28, all the evidence points to the fact that Franklin, like his British contemporaries, viewed his own provincial speech to be inferior to that of the London elites. This is still the case in Britain and Ireland today. I would add that many Americans, regardless of statements to the contrary, are still impressed or intimidated by disparitary RP standard speakers. In matters of both language and social comportment (i.e. etiquette, protocol, rules of politeness), the common people were expected to imitate or mimic the codes established by the upper and middle classes. Because neither Franklin nor his contemporaries were completely familiar or comfortable with these codes, their diffidence and

6 This leads me to wonder whether his lack of confidence could at least partially explain why he did not utter a word in his own defence when being publicly berated and humiliated in the "cockpit" (1774; Chapter 8, section 2.5) before an assembly full of jeering Lords.

discomfort were all the greater, hence the explosion in the number of books after the 1760s focusing on breeding and linguistic propriety (Beal, 1999).

Sociolinguistic Foundations

The conceptual tools outlined in Chapter 10 (Volume I) permitted me to construct a theoretical framework to explain these phenomena from a sociolinguistic perspective. For instance, Le Dù and Le Berre's work on Breton micro-dialects (at the parish level) in Brittany (reinforced by forty-five years of my own research on this same topic) furnished notions that I found essential to make sense of the sociolinguistic situation in Great Britain and the colonies during the first phases of settlement. This was based on the fact that native Breton-Celtic speakers are 90% illiterate in their language, French being the only language taught officially in the public schools. It has been estimated that, at the end of the 15th century, only 10% of the English-speaking population may have been literate.

Linguistic identity and community belonging goes down to the parish level in western Brittany and dialectal fragmentation is a dreamland for dialectologists and phoneticians alike. A simple glance at McIntosh's *Linguistic Atlas of Late Middle English* (2013) makes it clear that the situation in England at the end of the Middle Ages was very similar.

Among the key terms proposed by Le Dù and Le Berre were the interdependent notions of "idiom" and "institution," concepts which are complementary to Milroy's "speech community," "network" and "cluster." Their definition of idiom and institution are indissociable and closely linked to "disparitary" and "paritary" registers which are viewed in the context of a continuum ranging from the very formal (marked by affective/emotional distance...) to the very informal (affective/emotional proximity, familiarity...). Another connected notion concerns the formation of inter-dialects which, these authors assert, contributed to the formation of regional ecclesiastical standards and related secular standards which grew out of the former. These inter-dialects often developed in and around market town. Many of the innovations which arose in London between 1500 and 1800 can be explained to the consequence of dialect mixing.

As defined by Le Dù and Le Berre, on the bottom rung of the sociolinguistic ladder is what they call the *badumes*.⁷ These were spoken by "lowe men" or "uplondisshe men" (cf. Robert of Gloucester 1300 and Caxton 1490, Chapter 10, section 6) whose mode of speech concerned oral, highly variable, stigmatized micro-varieties, again, right down to the parish level. Nevertheless, despite its

7 *Badume* is a Breton expression meaning "round here." When asking a dialect speaker "How do you say such and such a thing?" the inevitable response is "Ba-du-me ve(z) lâret..." "Round here we say..."

appeal, and because the term *badume* is unknown in linguistic circles outside of Brittany, I also use the term “basilect” here although I have redefined it for our purposes with the meaning of *badume*, that is, purely oral paritary idioms and registers characterized by strong affective sentiments and community solidarity.

At the summit of this sociolinguistic hierarchy is the “norm.” However, these authors describe it as a recent phenomenon (especially since the 18th and 19th centuries) that is dependent on the creation of a nation state. Only such a powerful institution having such overarching administrative, political and cultural authority and self-perceived legitimacy can have the pretention of imposing a unified standard model on *all* of its speakers. I stressed that, in Franklin’s day, the formation of this “norm” was only in its adolescence, hence the difficulty of “fixing,” as Polly Stevenson and Samuel Johnson put it, a common pronunciation for all social classes.

In addition to their concepts of *norme*, *standard* and *badume* (Le Dû & Le Berre, 1996), the reader will have noticed that I have borrowed three related terms from creolistics which correspond quite well to the diglossic situation during the Middle Ages and Early Modern period, namely, the acrolect, mesolect and, as we have just seen, basilect. I associated these most often with what amount to veritable social caste systems of these periods.

These conceptual elements were all useful in broaching one of the central topics of Part III (Volume II), namely, tracing the development of North American “koinés” during the 17th century, a notion which I argued is indispensable in understanding the genesis of American English and, in particular, the identification of Franklin’s native phonetic inventory. However, I pointed out that Montgomery (1996) warned scholars that this term, depending on how it is used, can cause confusion. Trudgill (2008) and Mufwene (2008) have rejected the terms *koine* and *koineization* altogether preferring “dialect mixture” in their place. Although I have taken heed of their caveats, I argued that “dialect mixture” is merely the first step in a long process of “koineization” which I see as implicating not only the fusing of dialects but also dialect levelling which is conducted in such a way that the end product is the formation of a new, coherent linguistic variety with its own internal rules (from the Greek *koinē* meaning “common” or “usual”; the end result is a single, common linguistic variety) which is perceived as such by its speakers. In other words, I feel that “dialect mixture” lacks not only temporal depth but very importantly, it ignores a process which comprises conscious and unconscious sociolinguistic acts and decisions on the part of the speech community.

To make sense of this phenomenon, I relied on several sociolinguistic theories which, once again, are also normally linked to creolistics. The first was Salikoko Mufwene’s “founder generation principle,” the idea that it is the first group of settlers in a given colony that establishes the linguistic foundations to which

later arrivals are forced to adopt. The second component of Mufwene's theory is his idea of the "feature pool," that is, applied to our North American context, the use of a mass of competing dialectal forms at the phonological, morphological, syntactic or lexical levels. Of course, this book only dealt with the phonological dimension of this question (cf. Chapter 11, Volume I).

It is in this context that I presented my idea of the "sharedness principle" which I contend was the first step in the levelling process. The concept is based on the idea that, in any given colonial settlement, the paritary idioms retained only those non-standard dialectal traits that were most common to all the contact varieties. The broadest, or most stigmatized or recessive characteristics of the fringe varieties were expunged from the disparitary idiom(s) but, for a time, survived orally in the paritary idioms within relevant institutions. This was often hastened by intermarriages between, people from different dialect regions who found themselves in the same settlements.

Although there were significant differences between basilects (cf. the examples of 19th-century Somerset and Lancashire English dialects, end of Chapter 10), I argued that, on the whole, the varieties brought over to North America were, to a considerable degree, mutually intelligible. Nevertheless, by definition, their speakers were highly conscious of the inferior status of their dialect speech (cf. linguistic insecurity below) and did what they could to shed their fragmented regional varieties and adopt the more prestigious models they heard around them. In this sense, it is important to realize that levelling was the consequence of a conscious decision on the part of the speakers to conform.

We also saw that many if not most settlers were bidialectal or even multidialectal or multilingual to one degree or other. That is, they were familiar with what I have coined the ecclesiastical standard. In Massachusetts, in particular, many dissidents were already literate before arriving in America and had thus mastered higher and lower registers of their local idioms. This of course, involved integrating the largely standardized rules of grammar inherent to the 1611 King James Bible.

In Chapter 11 (section 3.1), I suggested that the "sharedness principle" also explains Viereck (1985, 265, 293) and Wakelyn's (1988, 146-147) surprise that marked micro-dialectal features still current in British dialects varieties are largely absent in American dialects today. Wakelyn spoke of the absence of the voicing of initial /f/, /s/ and /ʃ/ as in southwestern England while Viereck gave the example of *housen* (which I would translate as a "hamlet" rather than "houses") and which he claimed had either not "crossed the Atlantic" or had "died out" very early. In fact, I counted thirteen examples of *housen* in the second volume of the Southold town records, New York (Case 1882, vol II, late 17th c. to 1787). The New Haven town records (Connecticut) offer three examples of *housen* dating to 1648 and 1649 respectively (Hoadly, 1857), etc. Armfield (1893)

cites having heard *housen*, along with a host of other examples that are also attested in Lowell's *Biglow Papers* (1848)).⁸ Over time, the most idiosyncratic and stigmatized morphological features, for instance, *utch* for "I" (Dorset and Somerset) or enclitic <-s> for "shall" were rejected (e.g. *I se* > *I's(e)* "I shall," spelt "Ice" by Shakespeare in his *Henry V*, and still heard in Lancashire (German, personal notes) and Scotland (Robinson, 1985), while a host of other *shared* non-standard features were retained for use in less-prestigious social or work-related institutions.

Hundreds of interesting phonological examples were collected in Part III, such as the variable spellings of "were" in the 17th-century Massachusetts town records (Orbeck 1927): *ware* [wæ:ɪ ~ wɛ:ɪ], *weer* [wi:ɪ], *wur* [wɔ:ɪ], *war* [waɪ, ~ wæɪ]... giving an idea of what the phonetic range was for this word (cf. *Mouth* words below). Grandgent also gives "war" in Massachusetts for "were" in 1899, two hundred years later, showing the persistence of these stigmatized pronunciations at this late date. The fact that these kinds of features survived for so long before dying out offers further testimony of the existence of dual disparitary and paritary registers/idioms within each colonial koine. Solid textual proof of this is provided by Franklin and Webster (cf. Chapter 14 and Part III, cf. below).

Howard Giles' "Communication Accommodation Theory" provided another indispensable conceptual tool to explain how settlers arriving in an alien and often hostile New World environments did their utmost to blend in with the strangers with whom they found themselves. The intense fear and insecurity they experienced were strong motivating factors that encouraged settlers to conform to the dominant social (religious and cultural) as well as the linguistic models on location (cf. Rev. Allin's experience, Chapter 11, section 2.2.3). On the other hand, Bickerton's Bioprogram Theory explains how, in any given colony, the more relaxed paritary registers were probably given shape by the children of each successive generation of settlers who, unlike their parents, had no difficulty assimilating to the koinés spoken by their peers who were already on location. This process has been repeated for centuries in America (and elsewhere around the world) and continues to the present day. I have been a witness to this in my own lifetime in New Bedford, a port city in southeastern Massachusetts where immigrants from Iceland, Norway, northern England, Portugal and French-speaking Québec found themselves settling in the same city. These ethnic groups tended to settle in different neighbourhoods (e.g. the "north end" was French speaking, the "south end" was further divided between the Portuguese fishing community and the English textile workers), while the children socialized in the

8 Orbeck (1927, 31) provides a nice example of another -en plural in *burchen* (Plymouth, 1663) next to *burches* (Groton, 1680) for "birches" showing that -en plurals were certainly used in early America and persisted longer in the paritary idioms than we imagine.

same public schools. The parents never quite succeeded in losing the foreign accents while their children integrated flawless southeastern Massachusetts vernacular English. I clearly recall the American-born adults of English descent code-switching between Massachusetts English and their parents' northern English varieties (usually for humorous effect, e.g. "Put kekkle on, love!").

I thus interpreted the data collected from an evolutionary perspective, explaining that, from the very moment of settlement, sociolinguistic factors linked to overt and covert prestige immediately kicked in and, depending on the institutions in which they were used, the end result was sociolinguistically-conditioned, "not-so-natural," selection. What I mean by this is that, on account of the sharedness principle, but also pressures from above to adopt the prestigious disparitary registers, it was the speakers themselves of all social classes who consciously shaped their own varieties and registers, not the opposite. The role of women in this upwards drift was significant given that they were often the most active in enforcing the sociolinguistic codes.

Once again, the demographic considerations in Chapter 11 (section 2.2.1) and Chapter 12 (section 2) show that the first waves of settlers in New England came largely from eastern and southeastern England and the London area followed later by a component from the Southwest. We also saw that, during Franklin's youth, 59% of the population of Boston was from Suffolk and Essex with an additional 10% from London (Fischer, 1989). His own idiolect was certainly conditioned by the local subvariety that developed there. As we saw in Part IV, such English regionalisms can be observed in his RMS transcriptions such as *hev* for "have" and *eer* for "are"; forms that are attested in McIntosh's *Linguistic Atlas of Late Middle English* (2013) for eastern England. The 16th- and 17th-century English orthoepists also cite these pronunciations as well as in the New England town records, Franklin's poetry and a multitude 19th- and 20th-century dialect sources (Wright, 1905, the SED (1967-71)). In Chapter 12, I summarized the major conclusions regarding the different phases of koineization.

Although American English, collectively, has been described as a koine, I have argued that, according to the demographic and thus dialectal input in any given North American colony, distinct fully grammaticalized, but similar, koines developed in each major colonial settlement, not just one. This dialectal input was almost exclusively from southeastern and southwestern England throughout the 17th century and more globally, south of a line drawn from Preston to Hull. Pennsylvania and Delaware were the colonies that were probably the most marked by northern English features. Settlers from Delaware and Pennsylvania, accompanied by large numbers of "Northern Britons" (Ulster Irish protestants, lowland Scots and northern Englishmen), spread southwards into the southern Appalachians where their dialects fused with those of settlers arriving from the east, from Virginia and North Carolina. My point in this specific case, is that the

Pennsylvania and Delaware founder generation, 80% of whom came from the Northwest Midlands, contributed significantly to development of what is now called southern Appalachian English. I have mentioned that the input of Scots-Irish English speakers, contrary to most analyses, should perhaps be viewed as an adstrat, the impact of which was occasionally grammatical and lexical, but certainly not phonological. The fundamental reason for this conclusion is that the founding koines of the middle and southern colonies had been established more than half a century previous to the arrival of the vast majority of the latter (i.e. after 1765). The speech habits of the children of these northern Britons were significantly conditioned by the language of their peers on location.⁹

Disparitary and Paritary Registers for Each Koiné

Another important point is that each regional colonial koiné possessed two basic disparitary and paritary “registers” which were organized along a continuum and socially conditioned according to their use in specific social and professional institutions. This is another major hypothesis on which this study is based. The disparitary registers were closest to the standard model spoken by the “polite” elements of society back in southeastern England. It was in this register that the written language flourished.

The paritary registers, on the other hand, retained many elements inherited from the older English basilects but, due to the “sharedness principle,” the most marked features were gradually weeded out from the feature pool by the speakers themselves. Nevertheless, one notices a large collection of non-standard traits common to most of these idioms and registers: multiple negation, the personal dative, a-prefixing, irregular verbal use, etc. By definition, the informal paritary idioms used in informal or work-related or social institutions were purely oral and it is this that explains why so few written traces have come down to us. As was mentioned above, the lack of written evidence does not mean basilectal-type features did not survive of long periods of time. The important point is that non-standard features have always been with us.

To repeat, by Franklin’s birth in 1706, the disparitary and paritary koines had largely been established and although they resembled each other in many respects, they were clearly identifiable by settlers from the different colonies. Franklin himself provides proof of this in his presentation of shibboleths of

9 Here I do not contest Dillard’s long list of examples of individual speakers of mixed English and Native American languages “creoles” and other combinations of languages in the frontier areas of North America (cf. Dillard, 1992, chapter 1). However, with the exception of AAVE in the southern states, for the reasons presented throughout Part II (Chapters 10-12, 14), I do not believe that any of these mixed varieties had any significant long-lasting impact on the development of American English, particularly in the realm of phonology.

Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York (1739).

Nevertheless, many of these paritary, non-standard features continued to be used *orally* until the late 19th and early 20th centuries (*housen*, for instance) before disappearing altogether. This was largely due to the growing literacy of the underclasses. As a result of the “sharedness principle” which streamlined the paritary registers of each koine from below, combined with powerful sociolinguistic influences from above, namely, via the prestigious ecclesiastical standard that people heard at church as well as the rising secular literary standard and, especially, increasing literacy the first one hundred years of settlement, considerable streamlining of the koinés took place. This certainly contributed to the impressions of British travellers regarding the purported “purity” and “uniformity” of the English spoken by all social classes. Some of these points will be elaborated upon below (cf. Chapters 10-12 for a detailed discussion).

Testing the Evidence

A second objective in this discussion was to test the soundness of Mufwene’s “founder generation principle.” With this in mind, I undertook a comparative study of the origins and development of Québécois French and Massachusetts English during the 17th and 18th centuries. The reason I adopted this comparative approach was on account of the remarkable parallels between the observations and commentaries made by highly educated French and English clerics, military officers and aristocrats, all of whom expressed their amazement with the perceived “unity” and “purity” of both the French and English spoken by settlers, regardless of social status. To my knowledge, this is first comparative investigation of Québécois French and colonial American English.

Although I rejected the earlier contentions proposed by 19th-century linguists that New England English and Québécois French originated from any specific counties or provinces of the home nations, for example, Essex for Armfield (1893) and Normandy for Rivard (1914), I argued that, when demographic evidence in both colonies is considered, it would be far more prudent to speak of broad geolinguistic source regions (combined with sociolinguistic pressures from the developing secular and ecclesiastical standards). Indeed, for New England, we saw that Fischer (1989, 31) provided remarkable evidence supporting this view (Chapter 11, section 2.2.1, Volume I).

But closer study shows that some counties contributed more than others, and that one region in particular accounted for a majority of the founders of Massachusetts. It lay in the east of England. We may take its geographic center to be the market town of Haverhill, very near the point where the three counties of Suffolk, Essex and Cambridge come together. A circle drawn around the town of Haverhill with

a radius of sixty miles will circumscribe the area from which most of the New England families came. That great circle (or semicircle, for most of it crosses the North Sea) reached Great Yarmouth on the coast of Norfolk, north to Boston in eastern Lincolnshire, west to Bedford and Hertfordshire and south to the coast of East Kent. This area of approximately 7,000 square miles... roughly included the region that was defined in 1643 as the Eastern Association – Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire and Lincolnshire – plus parts of Bedfordshire and Kent. (Fischer, 1989, 31)

As I pointed out in Chapter 11, Fischer's observations are quite extraordinary, because Armfield's informant, Mr Gurteen, was a native of Haverhill, Essex, the very same town which Fischer identifies as being at the centre of this geographic radius! I applied the same argument to Québécois French. Although it cannot be claimed that Québécois is of direct Norman descent (or even 17th- or 18th-century Parisian French, as has been proposed), it does share many characteristics at all levels of grammar and phonology with the Norman variety, or at least enough to lead de Tocqueville, a Norman himself, to state that the French of the Québécois lawyers with whom he had spoken resembled "middle-class Norman French" of his day. The fact is that the Normans provided the largest percentage of immigrants to French Canada (34%). The founder generation consisted of settlers from Mortagne-au-Perche in Lower Normandy, who arrived in Québec in 1634 and 1635.

Furthermore, in August 2025, I discovered a remarkable book entitled *Les chansons du cousinage: Normandie-Amérique du Nord* (Bouthillier, Davy & Guillorel, 2022) which offers powerful historical and ethnographic evidence showing that the lyrical ballad tradition of Québec stems in large part from Normandy and adjacent regions north of the Loire from which 58% of the French settlers originated (Chapter 11). The parallel with the linguistic evidence is highly thought-provoking. Language should thus be considered more broadly as an element of immaterial culture (cf. Sharp and Karpeles, 1916, for similar evidence in the Appalachians showing precise British sources for many of the ballads they collected).

However, just as with Haverhill, Essex, in England, it would be more judicious to view this area of France as the centre of a 150-200 km radius stretching from Paris to the coastal regions of Normandy and Brittany (which includes Maine, Anjou, Loire-Atlantique, etc.), regions which contributed by far the greatest number of settlers. A large contingent (30%) also came from coastal regions between Nantes and La Rochelle directly south of the Loire. We saw that these varieties shared many characteristics with those from north of the Loire (but are radically different from Occitan varieties to the south).

I concluded that, the major dialectal input into the American colonies by the founder generations throughout the 17th century was almost exclusively from southern and, in particular, southeastern England (see koineization process

outline above). We have seen that, by the time of Franklin's birth, the formal disparitary and informal paritary koines were largely fixed and relatively similar to one another throughout the colonies (Krapp, 1925). These New England koines were not perceived to be phonologically different in any significant sense from those idioms spoken in the rural regions outside of London.

One of the most important observations presented in the outline above is that, after only one hundred years of settlement, distinct "American" koines of English, both paritary and disparitary, had already been formed in each colony by 1700. Significantly, by at least the first quarter of the 18th century, speakers could recognize the origins of people coming from other colonies (even if English visitors could not!). On several occasions in this book, I have cited Franklin's (1739) concise descriptions of such regionalisms, including the non-standard verbal morphology that he deplored (and that is still very much a feature of contemporary vernacular American English). Some of his examples are still characteristic of these same regions today (e.g. New York and Pennsylvania in particular), more evidence of linguistic continuity from colonial times. Webster (1789) also provides a wealth of priceless information of this kind in his *Dissertations* (1789) and he often names the states where various non-standard phonological, morphological or lexical traits were still heard (as well as their English sources). Contrary to the claims of some linguists (cf. Chapter 11 and Chapter 12), this proves without any doubt that unwritten paritary non-standard idioms of the kind described in Chapters 10-12, features of which are presented throughout Part III (Chapters 16-24), were abundant in 18th-century North American English. Many of these survived well into the 19th century and, in many cases, to the present day (for Franklin's prescriptive views cf. Chapter 14, Volume I).

I have argued that modern American non-standard dialects are the result of seamless, oral transmission of paritary registers of the colonial koines that have been transmitted since colonial times at multiple sociolinguistically pertinent levels and in an equal number of institutions. To repeat, the "founder generation principle," combined with Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory and Bickerton's Bioprogram Theory, when viewed collectively, provide what I consider to be a convincing model showing how it was (and still is) the *children* of incoming immigrants, whether they were speakers of foreign languages or English, Scottish, Irish or Welsh-English dialects, who assimilated their speech to the koines they heard in the respective colonies in which they settled. I believe that it is this process that best explains the linguistic continuity in American English down to the present day. If this were not the case, how could one explain that GA English is closer to proto-RP London English (early 19th century) than modern RP English. Indeed, in a number of important respects, the latter is more innovative from a diachronic perspective than GA (cf. Fig. 15.6).

Dialectology and Historical Phonology

On the surface at least, the rich harvest of linguistic variation collected and studied in Part III (Volume II) can be simultaneously confusing, overwhelming and, at times, contradictory. For instance, how could New England poets still be rhyming *lay ~ tree* (Freneau), *extempore ~ tree* (Franklin, 1748), *meet ~ fate* (Woodward, 1814), etc. (cf. Chapter 17, section 2.1). It was obvious that a solid diachronic framework was required to make sense of such phenomena which, as the reader has already seen, is quite abundant. For my diachronic approach, I adopted Mazarin’s ingenious six-phase model for dating phonological change (cf. Chapter 15). Covering the period from 1500 to 1800, one of the many strengths of his scheme is that he demonstrates phonological change according to overlapping dialect types and chronologies (A, B1, B2, C1, C2 and D). The phonemic systems that characterize each of these also overlap by as much as a hundred years or more. The consequence is that types A through C2 all share numerous features but, very importantly, not the same ones for any given period. This explains the situation observed in Lincolnshire which I outlined in Chapter 15, for instance, *Mouth* words realized as [mæuθ ~ meuθ ~ mu:θ] (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 752) but also the colonial “feature pools” and the related “phonetic ranges” observed for any given key word attested in the colonial town records. In Figure 15.4 (a version of which is reproduced below), I proposed approximate dates for each of Mazarin’s dialect type.

Dialect types	Mazarin’s dating scheme	Earliest births and latest deaths of orthoepists’ according to dialect type
Type A	1500-1650	b.1513 - d.1709
Type B1	1550-1625	b.1550 - d.1625
Type B2	1600-1675	b.1595 - d.1703
Type C1*	1625-1700	b.1600 - d.1771
Type C2*	1680s-1750	b.1655 - d.1814
Type D	1730-1800	b.1707 - d.1847

*My interpretations of his dating scheme.

This flexible, overlapping approach corresponds far better to what I have discovered in my own fieldwork in England, America, but also western Brittany. In my view at least, this provides a solid framework to explain the phonological picture revealed in Part III. As mentioned above, when examining the data in Wright’s EDD or the SED, for instance, one observes many traces of earlier phonological systems that have survived over large geographical areas of England and Scotland until the present day (for comparison, see the LALME

examples in Chapter 10).

The conclusion is clear. Any speaker living in any given speech community will master a range of idioms and registers in accordance with his/her hierarchical position in society and the social institutions in which he/she is implicated. This explains why linguistic variables (phonological, morphological, grammatical or lexical) can evolve at different rates of speed even within the same community.

To illustrate this, I cited Labov's famous 1966 study about the treatment of the /r/ as a key sociolinguistic indicator in identifying "Social Stratification in New York City" (Chapter 10). From my perspective, his novel approach very clearly illustrates how *a synchronic analysis can never be totally divorced from diachronic change*, a point which I have made repeatedly in this book. In this case we saw how, during the 1960s, lower working-class New Yorkers conserved the older r-less pronunciations while upper class speakers were in the process of assimilating the more prestigious GA retroflex /r/ in post-vocalic positions. This has a lot to do with the shift of social and economic power from the East Coast toward the West during the second half of the 19th century, vast areas of the country where /r/ [ɹ] is pronounced in all positions.

We saw that r-lessness was considered vulgar in 17th and 18th centuries Massachusetts where r-lessness became generalized around 1850 (Grandgent, 1899). The same trend occurred in London around the same time. R-lessness finds its source in southeastern England and Walker (1791), who defended its retention in all etymologically justifiable environments, acknowledged its weak postvocalic realization in the London area. We also saw that r-loss became a salient and prestigious feature of RP, but not necessarily in Massachusetts where I recall it as being a "normal," popular feature. On the other hand, lowered [a:] in words such as *pass*, *half*, *path*, was considered sophisticated and associated with upper-class families like the Kennedys.

What we observed in New York and Massachusetts corresponds to the progressive loss of prestige of non-rhotic accents that were once commonplace in many areas of the east coast until the first quarter of the 20th century. We observed multiple examples in the Massachusetts town records as early as the 17th century. Today, rhoticity is the growing rule among young Massachusettsans and New Yorkers.

Trudgill (1974), whose research was deeply influenced by Labov's work, goes even further in establishing the correlation between speech and class. Where Labov only recognizes three social classes, Trudgill presents five hierarchical levels: 1) MMC (Middle Middle Class), 2) CM (Lower Middle Class), 3) UWC (Upper Working Class), 4) MWC (Middle Working Class) and 5) LWC (Lower Working Class). This demonstrates once again that the sociolinguistic dimension of the Great Chain of Being is still with us.

Moreover, if one adheres to the stages of Jespersen's Great Vowel Shift, it

becomes obvious from the mass of data gathered in Part III, that many of the phonological changes that “should have occurred” have (depending on the varieties) been frozen at various stages corresponding to the 15th, 16th, 17th or 18th centuries. Other varieties, on the other hand, show innovations going far beyond the stages reached by either contemporary RP/GA (Chapter 15, Chapters 16-24).

As demonstrated in Chapter 20 (Volume II), as late as 1970, the SED recorded multiple pronunciations of “mouth” in Lincolnshire alone such as [mu:θ], [mauθ], [ma:θ], [mæuθ] and [mɛuθ]... (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 752; cf. Chapter 15) while further west in Derbyshire, the SED gives [mɛuθ], [mauθ], [mɛ:θ] ... (Orton & Barry, 1970, 609) were still commonplace. The most striking of these Lincolnshire examples is [mu:θ] which predates the Great Vowel Shift altogether (i.e. 1450+). On the other hand, examples such as [mæuθ] and [mɛuθ] are far more innovative. The Derbyshire pronunciation [mɛ:θ] (also common in Cheshire and Lancashire) goes even further off the charts and well beyond RP/GA English /mauθ/. We also saw, for instance, that East Midlands [mæuθ] and [mɛuθ] (SED) were also the dominant forms in 18th- and 19th-century rural Massachusetts (Grandgent, 1899), but also in the American South (Krapp, 1925, Hall, 1942). In 18th-century America, [mæuθ] appears to have been more common along the eastern seaboard and it is still heard in relic communities stretching from Newfoundland to Martha’s Vineyard, down to Tangier Island in the Chesapeake Bay and, finally, to Ocracoke (North Carolina). Note that Franklin proposed [mauθ ~ mɒuθ] as the pronunciation for his RMS which, I have argued is probably London-based (cf. Chapter 27) and may correlate with one form he recorded in his 1768 manuscript in which he presents *Price* words as [ai]. If his natural pronunciation of the latter was [ɹi ~ əi], I suspect that his native pronunciation of *Mouth* words may have been [ɹu ~ əu]. (cf. Franklin’s pronunciation of “war,” “tar,” etc. below).

One of several conclusions coming out of this comparative approach, collating both dialectal, diachronic and sociolinguistic considerations, is my conclusion that overly rigid linear timelines tracing language change simply distort the phonetic reality on the ground, that is, they simply do not reflect the language as a whole in all its complexity. Once again, the point here is that our vision of phonological change is often warped by what Milroy (1982) called “standard ideology.” While the GVS is both essential and convenient, I hope to have shown that assigning strict dates for specific sound changes is highly misleading in the sense that it is generally intended to highlight the evolution of RP/GA alone, the only two varieties that have been considered worthy of interest by many linguists in the past. The rest of the English dialectal systems have often been shunted to the side and excluded from such discussions.

We have seen that the difference between the social and linguistic situation in the North American colonies, particularly during the 17th century, was that

pronunciations of the kind observed were restricted to parish communities back in England. However, settlers from such rural communities who spoke basilectal varieties of their regions, now found themselves living and interacting within other dialect speakers in the same colonial settlements. Here the pertinence of concepts such as the “founder generation,” “feature pools,” “phonetic ranges,” the “sharedness principle” or “dialect levelling” come to the fore. All of these combined contributed to the formation of new mixed linguistic systems or *koinés* (cf. Part II, Chapters 10-12).

Probing under the “Tip of the Iceberg”¹⁰

To my knowledge, no systematic comparative study of 17th- and 18th-century English and “American” phonology has ever been undertaken on the scale presented in this book. Three major objectives were presented for Part III (Chapters 16-24):

- to identify the main phonological traits of the colonial New England feature pool;
- based on Franklin’s rhymes schemes, to reconstitute Franklin’s native Boston accent;
- to determine whether 18th-century Americans and Englishmen were conscious of speaking something other than the “English” of the motherland.

It is this dimension of my work that took the longest to accomplish and posed the greatest number technical challenges. Given the complexity and quantity of the data collected here, I refer the reader to Chapter 24 for a more complete overview of the major findings and conclusions of Part III (cf. sections 1.1.1 to 1.1.22). Franklin’s “American” pronunciation is displayed in Figures 24.1 and 24.2. Based on the data gathered in Part III, I subdivided the phonetic ranges into innovative and conservative categories.

Globally speaking, from a diachronic perspective, and for any given period between the 16th and the 18th century, paritary features have tended to be innovative and associated with lower status speakers while disparitary characteristics have largely been conservative, reflecting the pronunciation of earlier periods. These have generally valued by higher status people. This provided interesting insights into the sociolinguistic perceptions of language propriety during both the 17th and 18th centuries. When taken collectively, the phonetic ranges assembled for each of Wells’ key words permit the identification

¹⁰ The phrase is borrowed from Jim Milroy (1982).

of the entire New England phoneme inventory and their allophones. As we have seen repeatedly, in terms of prestige, formerly stigmatized characteristics repeatedly bubble up to the sociolinguistic cauldron and, over time, end up gaining acceptability among later generations of polite speakers (cf. Chapter 24). In particular, this is how I see the development of RP English.

Based on Mazarin's diachronic framework (Chapter 15, cf. Figure 15.6), I concluded that Franklin's native phonological system represents a fusion of older Type C1 (1580-1700) English idiom with elements within it reaching back into the B2 (1600-1675) phase. The model he presents in his RMS, however, is globally closer to C2 (1680-1750) (with the exception of his stray New Englandisms) and occasional D1 stage innovations, namely, the systematic centralization of words spelt <ear>, <ir> and <er> <ur>, <wor>.

Mazarin reached a similar conclusion and states his surprise that Franklin spoke "like a Londoner" while the inhabitants in the villages around Boston had retained C1 features ([ɛ:] for *Meat* words, Type B and C [ɛi] for *Wait* words, etc.). In passing, I concluded that older Types A and B1 [æi] was also a variant of *Wait* words in 18th-century New England alongside [ɛi] and [ɛ:] pronunciations. This [æi] pronunciation survived into the 19th century in Dorset (Burton, 2010) and can still be heard in Norfolk (Upton & Tilling, 1970). Franklin most often realized it as [ɛ:] and possibly [ɛi] on occasion in his poetry but he systematically in his RMS (Chapter 27, section 1.1; Chapter 28, Fig. 28.4). In a similar way, his pronunciation of *Meat* words are pronounced [ɛ: ~ ɛ:] in his poetry but, without exception, with innovative [i:] in his RMS.

Returning to *Wait* words, I suspect that GA /ɛɪ/ results of this earlier Types B and C variant realization which continued to be used into the Modern English period (1750+). It did not just suddenly appear in the 19th century out of thin air as is often suggested. I also propose that that this older [ɛi] realization may have spread to *Face* words by analogy around the same period.

One of the important conclusions reached here is that the disparitary koines spoken in New England and elsewhere, preserved important traces of the older disparitary English models that were now going out of style in 18th-century London. In this sense, we observe the first examples of colonial lag. Furthermore, even after spending so many years in the capital, Franklin never fully lost his Boston accent. This is also supported by the discovery of numerous New England phonological characteristics that emerge in his RMS transcriptions (e.g. -ly [ləi] below).¹¹

11 Following Krapp (1925), I suspect that, at the time, Philadelphia pronunciation was relatively similar to that spoken in Massachusetts but with heavier input from the Northwest Midlands. Having said this, I have not been able to identify features that were specifically associated with Philadelphia English, with the possible exception of his use of /æ/ in words such as "calm" [kæ(:)lm] and his insistence on pronouncing [hw-], a feature that was rare in Massachusetts (cf. Chapter 27 and 28 for more discussion of [hu- ~ hw]).

Franklin's regional middle-class New England speech was thus close to varieties of less polished, conservative provincial English heard in regions outside of London. Writing at the beginning of the 19th century (but born in 1758), Webster's testimony supports this conclusion.

It is further to be remarked that the common unadulterated pronunciation of the New England gentlemen, is almost uniformly the pronunciation which prevailed in England, anterior to Sheridan's time, and *which, I am assured by English gentlemen, is still the pronunciation of the body of the British nation.* (1806, xvi).

In the end, there is nothing particularly surprising about the archaic nature of Franklin's colonial pronunciation, considering that he was born in 1706 and that most of his siblings were born in the last quarter of the 17th century, a number of them back in Northamptonshire, England. His own father and mother were born in 1657 and 1667 respectively.

The Linguistic Evidence

As I pointed out in Chapter 25 (Volume II), all scholars who have studied the RMS, from Alexander Ellis (1869) to Charles Wise (1948) have assumed that Franklin's scheme reflects his own native Boston English variety. Given that, by and large, scholars have judged that his RMS resembles what is known about late 18th-century London English pronunciation, they have assumed, with some nuances (i.e. Krapp, 1925; Mazarin, 2020), that Franklin's English, hence Boston English, and London English were essentially the same. We have seen, however, that the logic here is circular.

After conducting a preliminary study of the RMS in 2014 (cf. General Introduction), my suspicions were immediately raised that this might not be the case when I noted a significant number of inconsistencies in Franklin's transcriptions, that is, errant words which reflected pronunciations that were far more conservative and in contradiction with the phonological system he adopted for his RMS (cf. Chapter 28). I then asked myself whether these stray transcriptions may have betrayed his own *native* Boston (Philadelphia-influenced) accent. Based on the data accrued in Parts III and Part IV, I can now affirm that this is indeed the case (more on this below). I was also surprised that these deviant transcriptions were not noticed by previous linguists.

However, to demonstrate this I needed to discover what I could about Franklin's own idiolect/sociolect. This outwardly simple objective opened a can of worms. Firstly, this subject has never been studied from this angle, that is, no attempt that I know of has ever been made to identify Franklin's native accent. Secondly, no comprehensive study of colonial American English phonology has been undertaken since Krapp's pioneering book *The English Language in North America* (1925, vol. 2). Michael Montgomery (2003, 15) gives a cogent explanation

for the dearth of studies of this kind.

Interest in basic description has waned considerably in research on early AE, partly as a result of emphasis on quantitative approaches, which consider narrowly circumscribed sets of variable features and deem others unworthy of examination. The long-term result of this is the lack of comprehensive works such as Krapp (1925) (*yet to be superseded for the history of American pronunciation, but badly needing updating*) (my italics).

Although my intention was certainly not to “supersede” Krapp’s seminal work, Part II (Volume I) and Part III (Volume II) were devoted to conceiving and applying diachronic and sociolinguistic theories as well as practical methodological approaches to answer these questions (in as much as this is still possible).¹² Without this preparatory groundwork, the analysis of Franklin’s RMS would have yielded the same results as all previous studies (cf. Chapter 25 for an outline of earlier scholars main observations and conclusions), that is, Franklin spoke like a Londoner and, therefore, educated colonial Americans spoke in the same manner as he did. As we have seen, the sociolinguistic picture is infinitely more complex.

A major strategy that I adopted was inspired by Joan Beal (1999, 14-15) who observed that American linguists in the past have tended to limit linguistic parallels with 18th-century British English to the data that relates directly to specific features of American English. Nevertheless, as I also pointed out, British historical linguists have also tended to ignore early American data. For instance, Dobson (1968) does not make the slightest reference to any early American colonial evidence or sources in his monumental *English Pronunciation: 1500-1700*. Even if my presentation is certainly not exhaustive, as far as I am aware, the comparative study of 17th- and 18th-century English and American English *phonology* undertaken in Part III (Chapters 16-24) has never been attempted on this scale. See, however, Kytö’s research on early American English (1993). Matti Rissanen (1985), for instance, took part in the transcription of the Salem witch trials (in which Franklin’s aunt was involved as witness) as well as work on early American periphrastic “Do.” Although I may be mistaken, I am aware of no largescale work on early American phonology that has been conducted recently.

With this in mind, and Wells’ lexical sets as a basis for evaluation throughout, I compared the descriptions of English pronunciation made by 16th- and 17th-century English orthoepists with evidence extracted from 17th-century New England and New York colonial town records. Not surprisingly, the data from

12 In passing, I should note that, forty years ago when I spoke to a well-known linguist about undertaking a similar study on the historical phonology of colonial American English, I was told that it was “impossible.” Readers will judge the worth of Part III, which represents this attempt.

both British and American sources corresponded remarkably well, showing that, as one would expect, there was indeed direct dialectal continuity between 17th-century England and North America.

One major problem was that, as we have seen, for any given word, the New England and New York data often presented ranges of variant pronunciations, hence my decision to record the pronunciation of vowels as “phonetic ranges” rather than under general phonemic representations. I proposed that the idea of a “phonetic range” was more practical when dealing with multidialectal contact situations, the implication here being that each dialectal system potentially has its own unique phonemic system (even this is an obvious simplification of reality!). My point here is that identifying vowels, diphthongs or consonants as phonemes in such contexts distorts the data (for reasons explained in Chapters 10-12, Part II, Volume I; see also *Phonetic Notation*, in the front matter). Such an approach in such colonial contexts leads one to assume that there was only a singly underlying phonemic system. Ultimately the orientation in these cases most often results in a linear representation of the data with RP or GA being the logical endpoint. Here, once again, we fall victim to what Milroy’s has branded as “standard ideology” (cf. above). The advantage of the “phonetic range” is that it identifies all of the competing variables of various dialectal origins within the “feature pool” at a given time for any of Wells’ key words. As I have stated before, this allows us to view what I have called the “building blocks” of early American (and English) phonology.

In order to determine the nature of Franklin’s native pronunciation, the most revealing and fruitful component of Part III was the detailed study of the rhyme schemes gleaned from Franklin’s poetry. This, I believe, is the first time this has ever been attempted. This was based on the examination of over 3,000 lines of verse that he composed between 1719 and 1758. Given that he began his fifteen-year stay in London in 1758, this information assuredly reflects his natural American pronunciation. But what does “American” imply here? Furthermore, can one assume there was no input from Philadelphia English in his idiolect? To guarantee that the evidence obtained in this analysis was not fortuitous, I studied an equivalent number of rhymes that were taken from the poetic compositions of two other New England poets, Timothy Dwight’s *Greenfield Hill* (1794) of Northampton, Mass. and Barlow’s *Columbiad* (1809) of Hartford, Conn. (over 6,000 lines total).

Despite the fact that these poets were decades younger than Franklin, the results were surprisingly similar, which I interpreted as evidence that there was indeed an underlying phonemic system shared by these three well-educated New Englanders. It also demonstrated to me that a unified New England koine had already arisen by the time of Franklin’s birth in 1706 (cf. Chapters 11, 12, 14). Otherwise, how could the three poets’ rhymes have been so similar,

especially with regard to the so-called “imperfect rhymes.” Furthermore, all of this comparative data concorded well with the testimonies provided by the 17th-century English orthoepists and early American town records. The information revealed that Franklin’s pronunciation was far closer to that which was common in late 17th-century England than the late 18th-century London English scheme revealed in his RMS (more on this below). In other words, the gap between innovative late 18th-century London English and the conservative New England evidence accumulated here was very significant.

Nevertheless, I felt that more confirmation was required to explain troublesome categories of rhymes that I initially labelled “imperfect rhymes,” rhymes that would be impossible for GA/RP speakers today involving the entire range of back vowels and which are difficult to explain diachronically, for instance, *God ~ wood*, *God ~ blood*, *God ~ road*, *road ~ rod*, *coast ~ cost*, *home ~ come*, etc. (Chapters 20-22).

Furthermore, the fact that these kinds of rhymes are present in all three of the New Englanders’ poetry (but also in the poetry of contemporary English poets) and that they are so numerous, ruled out the possibility that they could be brushed aside as simple eye rhymes. Why would over 80% of their rhymes be “perfect rhymes” and why would these specific category of key words be composed of imperfect or approximate rhymes? It made no sense to me. This was perhaps the most disturbing conundrum with which I was faced and which demanded the most research in Part III. At the beginning of Chapter 22, I indicated that after I had submitted the manuscript for review, I came across an article written in 1935 by a certain Harold Whitehall who was bewildered at the time, just as I was, by these rhymes. He raised the same question as I did, but without attempting to identify the underlying vowel. He came to the same conclusion as well, which is to say that each of the subcategories for each of these key words shared the same vowel, a vowel that I concluded was in the vicinity of [ʊ ~ ʏ ~ ɤ] depending on the speaker and area. In later times, it was in competition with [ʌ] (cf. Grandgent, 1899; Wells, 1988, 199).

As it turns out, in Chapters 21 (section 2) and 22, I concluded that these rhymes are tied to a historical phenomenon linked to the raising and shortening of ME /ɔ:/ in a number of southern and Midlands English dialects. The same occurred to and ME /ɔ/, which followed a similar path. I found parallel rhymes going back to Shakespeare showing that these features were not recent (for instance, both Franklin and Shakespeare rhyme *moon ~ sun*!). Finally, I also discovered modern dialectal pronunciations (Wright, 1905, the SED, etc.) showing that these pronunciations were still current in the midlands and east of England as late as the late 20th century. The SED (1970, 1971) actually records the very vowel I identified in Norfolk for all the key words indicated above (i.e. [ɤ]). Norfolk was also the county of origin of Franklin’s maternal grandparents. The fact

that these same pronunciations have survived in Modern English dialects and in New England strengthened these conclusions and provides further support for the argument in favour of phonological continuity between English and American English.

At another level, I had to interpret the other types of variant rhymes used by all three poets. Burton's study of William Barnes Dorset dialect poetry was particularly helpful in this regard given that he was also confronted with the same phenomenon in his own corpus when he asked the question "When one or other of these words (i.e. *love* or *above*) is rhymed with *drove*, *grove*, *rove*, *move*, or *prove*, as not infrequently happens, should we consider it a purely conventional eye-rhyme, or is it a true rhyme indicating that the vowel of all of these words is /ʌ/?" I demonstrated that all these rhymes were also frequent in the New Englanders' poems and concluded that this fact alone argued against the possibility that they were eye rhymes (Chapter 22). In addition, the same rhymes were common in the poetry of contemporary 17th- and 18th-century poets. The remarkable point here is that the New England data I gathered included these same rhymes. In other words, the New England data confirmed Burton's hypothesis about the possibility of an underlying /ʌ/ pronunciation in all the Dorset rhymes he cites, one hundred years *after* Franklin's poems had been composed... yet another sign of continuity.

However, I identified certain apparent inconsistencies within the poems of the poets themselves, for instance, Franklin's rhymes of *what* ~ *that* (conservative, cf. Chapter 19) and *what* ~ *not* (innovative). I proposed that these quirks were best explained by the fact that 18th-century speakers were used to hearing variant pronunciations of any given word and were, for this reason, adept at code-switching themselves. I heard this quite often in my own experience in Deane, near Bolton, Lancashire during the 1980s and 90s where older dialect speakers would spontaneously (and apparently unconsciously) shift to and from their modified standard English and dialect depending on cues communicated by their interlocutor(s) (Giles' CAT).¹³ The poet's ability to use variant pronunciations gave them far more flexibility in their compositions than would otherwise have been the case and, presumably, would neither have shocked nor displeased the listeners because they too were accustomed to doing the same.

James R. Lowell's *Biglow Papers* (1848), verse and prose written in the Boston vernacular, also provided clear examples of all these variant and occasional problematic features showing that they persisted in Massachusetts well into the 19th century. Using the methodological techniques presented in Part II

13 One example was of an elderly lady greeting the vicar with "What's to do with you, vicar?" rather than the usual, "What's do wi' thee?" (i.e. How are you?), which is a literal translation of Lancashire dialect into what she considered to be a higher register of dialect speech or even standard English.

(Chapters 10-12, 15)¹⁴ and applied in Part III, I was able to find attestations of these pronunciations not only in the 17th-century town records but also in the orthoepists' descriptions, more evidence of natural dialect transmission since the initial settlement period.

Finally, as suggested above, the nature of pronunciations was often confirmed by the existence of similar or identical pronunciation in English and American dialects recorded by linguists during the 19th and 20th centuries, some of which I have heard myself. I argued that this use of reviewing contemporary dialect data was justified by Ihalainen's demonstration that English dialects are far more conservative in ways than many (especially theoretical) linguists have imagined. As he explains, English varieties, in Britain especially, changed relatively little between 1776 and the end of the 19th century (before the passage of the 1870 Education Act) (Ihalainen, 1994). For this very reason, I gathered a large quantity of American and English dialectal data which, when viewed collectively and comparatively, offer a wide array of precious phonological clues that can provide plausible explanations for Franklin, Dwight and Barlow's rhymes of *war* ~ *air*, *war* ~ *care*, etc. which I concluded were pronounced [æ(:)ɪ]. Burton offers a similar realization for "air" [æɪɪ] in Devonshire. Shorrocks' transcription of *war* [wæ:ɪ], *tar* [tæ:ɪ], *star* [stæ:ɪ] in Bolton Lancashire provides concrete support for the utility of such an approach on theoretical grounds alone (Shorrocks, 1998). We saw that Joel Barlow (Connecticut) rhymes *bear* and *war* as well as *rear* ~ *war* and *there* ~ *war*, suggesting that the vowel in all of these words were also pronounced [æ:ɪ] in 18th-century Connecticut, just as it still is for *there* in conservative Appalachian speech.

Interpreting Phonetic Ranges

On account of the wide array of variable accents heard during the 18th century, it is apparent that Englishmen and Americans alike had difficulty telling each other apart. Either that or variation was so prevalent as to have been banal for them. This becomes more understandable when one considers the phonetic ranges identified in the New England town records in Part III, all of which were also identifiable as common English dialect pronunciations. One example has just been cited: *Meat* words having the following phonetic range [mɛ:t ~ mɛ:t ~ mɛ:t ~ mi:t]. We saw that [mi:t] was first attested in London at the end of the 16th century (Mazarin, 2020) but was associated with vulgar lower-class London (*mopsae*) speech. Franklin's rhymes prove his preference for [mɛ:t ~ mɛ:t] pronunciations (cf. *wave* ~ *leave*, *way* ~ *sea*, etc.) and one can assume that, at least for middle-class Massachusettsans, [mi:t] was still considered vulgar for many. Similar rhymes by his uncle Benjamin support this view. If so, this

14 Cf. Introduction to Chapter 10.

would offer another early example of colonial lag. And yet, in his RMS, all of his transcriptions of Wells' *Meat* words have /i:/ without exception, another sign that it was based on innovative London speech.

From a phonological perspective, identifying a phoneme in such a complex social environment is a very arbitrary task. Shorrocks gives an example of what I mean for Bolton, Lancashire, when he indicates that the frontier between phonemes can be "porous." For example, he writes that "There remains some degree of overlap between /ɛ:/ and /æ:/." In terms of phonetic space, there is a continuous run of variants between the two phonemes..." (Shorrocks, 1998, 182). This observation is highly significant when one considers that Shorrocks was studying the working-class speech of only one English city! For this and other reasons, I have generally chosen broad phonetic transcription to present much of the data in this book (see the section on Phonetic Notation in the front matter, as well as Chapters 17 and 21 for explanations on my phonetic transcriptions). Shorrocks' "continuous run of variants between two phonemes" are what I call "bridge" or "linking" vowels, that is, allophones potentially belonging to two phonemes. This phenomenon explains the shift, over time, from one phoneme to another and it is, my view, this kind of phonetic ebb and flow that triggered the Great Vowel Shift in the first place. It should come as no surprise that it occurred regions close to London where the concentration of dialect speakers from all over Great Britain was so great. Ironically, perhaps, the resulting "dialect mixture" observed in that city resulted in a sociolinguistic situation similar, in some ways, to that observed in the founding colonies of America.

By viewing the data from a broad, interdialectal perspective, one has a keener understanding of the ways any given vowel evolved (or not). Even though it is obvious that phonetic laws govern their movement, these patterns are conditioned by sociolinguistic background inherent to each idiom/institution in which it is used. The overall picture we see here, although outwardly chaotic to say the least, speaks volumes about the nature of not only the early colonial feature pool, but also of the varieties spoken back in England during the settlement period.

The data examined in Part III show a multitude of cases involving not only the lowering or raising of a given vowel but also their lengthening and shortening. This is another point that is rarely addressed. The point is that all the "phonetic ranges" here often include strings of allophones which can be viewed as presumed bridge vowels. From a cross-dialectal perspective, just a few examples suffice to demonstrate differing patterns of vocalic evolution in the 17th-century colonies.

For the words "length" and "fetch," the Hempstead (NY) town records give two tendencies involving raising, on one hand, *lingthe* [linθ] (1657), and lowering on the other, *lankth* [læŋkθ] (1661). The first provides an example of the *pin-pen* merger while the latter has become generalized throughout large

areas of the American South as [læ(:)ŋkθ]. Contemporary evidence for the Smokies also confirms the existence of [læŋθ] (Hall, 1942). These very early New York examples show that this lowering was once a northern colonial feature for certain speakers as well. Quoting William Barnes, Gachelin (1981) shows that [læŋkθ] was also a common Dorset pronunciation in the mid-19th century. Wright (1905) gives many other such examples throughout England, including [læŋkθ] (cf. Chapter 18). To repeat, this too is another argument in favour of continuity between England and colonial America.

The Hempstead records give *fichte* [fitʃt] (1657) for “fetched,” another case of the *pin-pen* merger. Yet, the Groton records (Mass.), show both raising as well as lowering: *fach* [fætʃ] (1691). Hall (1942, 21) also gives [fætʃ] for “fetch” in Tennessee alongside [læŋ] for “leg,” [kæŋ] for “keg,” etc. in the Smokies. Again, there is nothing unusual in this given that, even in modern colloquial GA, speakers still alternate between pronunciations such as [kætʃ] versus [kæʃ] for “catch,” and such oscillations were far more common in the 18th century. Note also that, for Bolton, Lancashire, Shorrocks (1998, 235) gives [fɒtʃ] for “fetch” and while Lowell (1848) writes *foth* for Boston. Webster (1789) confirms that this pronunciation was current in New England in his day as well.

The final point I wish to make in this summary concerns the possible origins of “breaking.” As far as I am aware, this phenomenon is unknown in Great Britain or Ireland today. It is often assumed to be a recent (19th century?) phenomenon that arose in the southern American states. On the contrary, I have presented evidence showing that breaking developed out of a natural tendency in 17th-century southeastern and London area English to lengthen short tense vowels (which are now lax). This may have been a conservative speaker that was shared throughout large areas of England. Recall Mazarin’s remarks about Katherine Philips: “Her mid-seventeenth century KIT /ɪ/ was so tense and peripheral that she felt comfortable rhyming it with FLEECE /i:/...” He also quotes Lord Wilmot (1647) as rhyming *leaps* ~ *skips*, *seem* ~ *him* (Mazarin, 2020, 19; see also Chapter 17, section 2.1). Nevertheless, we see that Wilmot is pronouncing *leap* like the lower-class London *mopsae*.

I proposed that one early example of breaking may be found in the early colonial records, once again in the Hempstead records, NY, where *aeers* for “ear” appears to represent [ʔæəɪz ~ ʔɛəɪz] (1665). The presence of the intervocalic glide <y> in *ayer* [ʔæjə ~ ʔɛjə] (1666) and *eyer* [ʔɛjə ~ ʔejə] (1695) reinforces the hypothesis that “breaking” was already a characteristic of 17th-century colonial English and was probably already stigmatized at this time (cf. Chapter 17). The lengthening of other lax vowels could explain other examples of breaking such as [hi-ɪm]. Here too, Mazarin seems to make this same connection between the lengthening of short or lax vowels and breaking in southern US English when he writes “Old-fashioned BATH [æ:] became a rising diphthong [æɛ] in the

American South” (Mazarin, 2020, 11).

This phenomenon of vowel lengthening and breaking is associated with “drawling,” another feature associated with southern US English today. However, this too was obviously a northern trait as well and was roundly condemned not only by Franklin but also by Webster who associated it with poorly educated New Englanders.

Such are the causes of the local peculiarities in pronunciation, which prevail among the country people in New England, and which, to foreigners, are the objects of ridicule. The great error in their manner of speaking proceeds immediately from not opening the mouth sufficiently. Hence words are *drawled out* in a careless lazy manner, or *the sound finds a passage thro the nose*. Nothing can be so disagreeable as that *drawling, whining cant* that distinguishes *a certain class of people* (my italics); and too much pains cannot be taken to reform the practice. (Webster, 1789, 108)

Once again, “disagreeable,” “careless,” “lazy” idiom is “an object of ridicule” associated with a “certain class of people”... and we can guess which one. Despite Franklin’s efforts to break the “chain” of the Great Chain of Being at the social and economic level by assisting the poorest strata of society in acquiring a better education, it is perhaps paradoxical that the linguistic model chosen to teach the people to improve their accent was the speech of those at the high end of the hierarchical ladder. In Franklin’s case, it was to be the socially elevated members of London society. On the other hand, Webster’s choice was the speech of older New England gentlemen.

The Sources of Franklin’s RMS

One of the vital questions I asked in Chapter 13 of Volume I was whether Franklin’s RMS may have been inspired by earlier works of a similar nature. I can now contend that Franklin did indeed consult the work a number of English 16th- and 17th-century orthoepists whose books certainly influenced aspects of his “Reformed Mode of Spelling.” This influence manifests itself in the way he structured his presentation of his phonetic characters with accompanying descriptions and explanations of their sounds. However, as we have just seen, the order of presentation of his vocalic and consonantal system was the fruit of his own logic and, I believe, stems from his experience as a professional printer and typesetter. To my knowledge, no study of this topic has ever been previously undertaken (cf. Chapter 28).

As I explained, it was a comment by Benjamin Vaughan in a footnote to his introduction of Franklin’s RMS (1779, 467) that caught my attention and, after some detective work, led me to dig a little deeper. Here, Vaughan mentions that he had found the name of “a certain Sir Thomas Smith” in Franklin’s notes. The wording implies that he was not aware of Smith’s identity, and he says no more

about him. I discovered that Sir Thomas Smith was Queen Elizabeth I's Secretary of State, Ambassador to France as well as a renowned Latinist (cf. Chapter 13). More significantly for our purposes, he is generally considered to be the father of English orthoepy. Only seventy-eight years after Caxton's *Eneydos* (1490), Smith published his landmark *De Recta* (1568). Because he felt that the English pronunciation had already changed so much since the 15th century, he set his sights on proposing a modernized English orthography. His *De Recta* served as a model for scores of orthoepists who followed him for nearly a hundred and fifty years, and over two hundred years if we include Benjamin Franklin and, less obviously, Noah Webster.

Although Smith was tolerant of regional pronunciations (his mother was from Lancashire and his father from Essex), he nevertheless felt that it was the English spoken at the court of England that should serve as a model for polite speakers. Furthermore, with the rapid expansion of the British Empire, the British ruling classes increasingly felt the need to develop an English acrolect that would not only elevate the prestige of English so as to be on a par with French and Latin, but that would also create a linguistic barrier separating the aristocracy from that of the lower classes. Smith was also the instigator of the concept of "one sound for one letter" and, like Franklin, he proposed new characters, not digraphs, to represent each English sound. Franklin was thus following a well-established tradition (cf. Chapter 13).

One of Smith's great admirers was John Hart, who published his *An Orthography* (1569), one year after the *De Recta*. I was particularly struck by the numerous parallels between Franklin's reform proposals and those found in John Hart's book. Their motivations for proposing a new orthography as well as their common approaches appear to be too similar to be accidental. Furthermore, Hart's remark that an efficient new orthography requiring the elimination of superfluous silent letters would be both beneficial for learners *but also save both ink and paper*, suggested to me that he too may have had some ties to the printing trade and that it may have been via this route that Franklin came to know of Hart's work. Given Franklin's frugality from a young age, he certainly had thought of the advantage of a spelling reform long before he drafted his RMS in 1768.

I also pointed out a number of characteristics shared by Franklin's RMS, Wallis' *Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae* (1653) and Wilkins' *Real Character and a Philosophical Language* (1668). Support for the idea that Franklin may have consulted these sources is found in his *Autobiography* where he mentions that, as an adolescent, he had read the 1711 edition of Greenwood's *Essay towards a Practical English Grammar*. In this book, I found that Greenwood praises both Wallis and, in particular, Wilkins, demonstrating that, very early in life, Franklin was certainly aware of their work. Conclusive evidence comes in the form of a letter from Franklin to Ezra Stiles on 1 September 1755 in which Franklin explains

that he had studied Wilkins' *Real Character and a Philosophical Language* when he was only sixteen. Although he states that he had forgotten many of the details of his system, he goes on to describe Wilkins' taxonomic organization of his universal language in some detail! Based on this evidence, we can be virtually certain that Franklin borrowed Wilkins' **y** character (chapter 3 of Wilkins' book) as one of his six new characters for his RMS. This is one of the most striking similarities between Wilkins and Franklin's phonetic systems.

If Mazarin (2020) is correct, **y** represented [ɣ] for Wilkins. All previous linguists who have studied the RMS have concluded that the value of Franklin's **y** was [Δ] and Malone has proposed [ə] and that his **yī** diphthong represented [Δi]. This was my initial impression as well. However, I changed my position after analyzing the evidence presented in Chapters 20, 21 and 22, most notably, Grandgent's observations about the Massachusetts pronunciation of *home*, *whole*, *stone*, etc. as well as the rhymes of the New England poets. I concluded that Franklin shared this [ɣ ~ ɣ̃] pronunciation with Wilkins for *Strut* words as well as [ɣi ~ əi] for *Price* words.

Another obvious parallel with Wallis' and Wilkins' work was Franklin's method of presenting his RMS featuring a list of symbols and descriptions of articulatory phonetic details explaining how they are pronounced as well as key words denoting their pronunciation. One of the strongest bits of evidence demonstrating Wallis' and Wilkins' influence on Franklin is that the three men offer the same minimal pair to describe the vowels of *folly* ~ *fall*, i.e. [ɒ: ~ a:]. In the original 1768 manuscript version of Franklin's vocalic and consonant table, he writes *folly* ~ *fall* and adds *ball*, as if he were recalling these minimal pairs from memory.¹⁵ However, in the 1779 edition of the RMS, he gives only *folly* ~ *ball*, perhaps due to an editorial decision made by Vaughan. It is hard to believe that this choice of key words is fortuitous. Furthermore, all three men claimed that the vowel of these words was qualitatively identical and differed only in length. This is true today for GA but not for RP. In addition, the three men belonged to the Royal Society (Wallis and Wilkins being among the founders along with Christopher Wren). I suggested that Franklin may have had direct access to their books while visiting the Royal Society's archives.

Mazarin (2020) proposes that Wilkins, in turn, borrowed **y** from a Welsh source and that Franklin simply adopted the symbol from Wilkins. However, in that discussion (Chapter 13), I pointed out that Franklin also had close friendships with a number of Welsh-speaking Welshmen, starting with Hugh Meredith, his first business partner in Philadelphia. Recall also that he occasionally printed Welsh-language proverbs (without translations) in his *Poor Richard's*

15 For a reason unknown to me, ~~fall~~ and ~~ball~~ are crossed out in this first draft (cf. Appendix 2). I can only suppose that Franklin was trying to recall these key words (for his minimal pairs) from memory.

Almanack. Finally, I explained that one counterargument to this idea is that the pronunciation of <y> in Welsh is not limited to [ə] but is also pronounced [i ~ i] and almost certainly [i] in the 17th century, alongside [ə] (cf. Chapter 13, section 1.10). Although I am convinced Franklin knew of Edward Lhuyd's *Archaeologia Britannia* (1707), perhaps through his connexions with Richard Price and Sir William Jones, both Welsh speakers, the phonetic alphabet Lhuyd had conceived for Celtic languages did not respect the one-letter-one-sound rule. The Welsh-speaking Edward Lhuyd was interested in Celtic languages primarily and he was definitely not an orthoepist.¹⁶ Interestingly, however, Webster speaks of history of Celtic languages, including Breton (which he calls Armorican) and Welsh, in the first chapter of his *Dissertations on the English Language* (1789). This demonstrates that he had certainly read Lhuyd's book, perhaps thanks to his discussions with Franklin (cf. Chapter 29).

However, another question arises at this point. Why were Franklin's sources limited to 16th- and 17th-century English orthoepists? One possibility is that Franklin, like Webster, believed that the golden age of English language and literature had begun to decline after the reign of King George I (1727) and reached rock bottom by 1760, the year of the coronation of King George III. As I explained in Chapter 14, Franklin was among a handful of men who proposed new orthographic systems during the 18th century. English orthoepists such as Sheridan, Kenrick, Nares, Walker, etc. concentrated their efforts on defining a single model of pronunciation, not a spelling reform. More importantly, unlike Webster, Franklin had spent fifteen years in London rubbing shoulders with the most influential men and women in the British Empire and clearly believed their English should be the basis of cultivated speech throughout the Empire.

Franklin's RMS: A Long-Neglected Forerunner of Modern Phonology?

Part IV of Volume II (Chapters 25-28) consists of a detailed presentation and analysis of Franklin's "Reformed Mode of Spelling." For a detailed account of the results and conclusions, I refer the reader to Chapter 28. Here I propose a brief summary of a few major findings.

Chapter 25 begins with a review of all those scholars who have conducted studies of the Franklin's RMS, starting with Webster (1789) and Alexander Ellis (1869) to Charles Wise (1948).¹⁷ I have argued throughout that the value of

16 I explained in Chapter 13, section 1.10 that Franklin did his best to encourage Webster to implement his RMS reform and he hoped Webster would carry out this arduous task. Otherwise, one wonders why he would have given him all his notes, some of which included information about the 16th- and 17th-century orthoepists including Sir Thomas Smith, among others, whom Webster quotes on a number of occasions.

17 Wise's article is by far the most informative and detailed study, and yet it is only twenty-one pages.

Franklin's RMS has been largely misjudged and, more especially, underestimated, not only with regard to its conception and scientific value but also on account of its impact (cf. legacy below). Kemp Malone's opinion is typical:

Franklin's alphabet.... is not rigidly scientific, nor does it provide for all the simple sounds of the language. But this does not keep it from being a production highly creditable to its author... Franklin worked out his problem with great acumen, and exhibits a phonetic insight very rare for the eighteenth century... (Malone, 1925)

Nevertheless, Malone's article is only four pages long and he says little about what he means by Franklin's "great acumen" or "phonetic insight." He adds that Franklin "was able to keep his symbols down to 26 only by doing violence to his phonetic scheme." Neither Malone nor most other linguists fully appreciated that Franklin had not adopted a phonetic scheme but rather what I have described as a proto-phonemic system of orthography. As a professional printer, he had certainly given the matter much thought since the time he began his apprenticeship at the age of twelve. The fact that he had studied and partially mastered the function of Wilkins' *Real Character* (1668) provides support for this hypothesis. For this reason alone, he had far more insight into phonological and orthographic matters than is generally recognized.

I pointed out in the General Introduction that the historian, Walter Isaacson (2003), openly derides Franklin's scheme describing it as "Quixotic" and, after quoting a passage of his RMS phonetic alphabet (which is very improperly transcribed in the Isaacson's book), he declares that it is incomprehensible and a "linguistic fantasy," adding that "it is easy to see why it did not catch on."

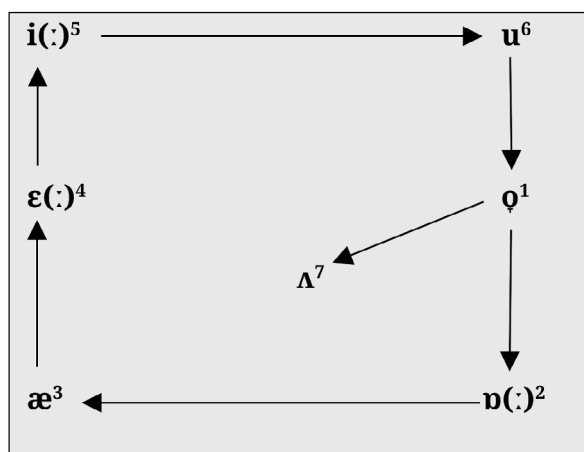
Furthermore, all of these scholars (with the exception of Krapp, who adopts a more subtle position) have assumed that the RMS reflects Franklin's Boston or Philadelphia English. The latest of these is Looby (1984, 13) who writes "For Franklin's new alphabet represented not the phonetic norms of London, but those of Philadelphia; it transferred the center of linguistic authority from England to America." The problem is that neither Looby nor Isaacson are phoneticians and have simply misunderstood the dual nature of Franklin's objectives: creating a simplified orthography that would also serve as a pronunciation guide for those belonging to the labouring classes having little access to a formal education.

In addition, many of those who have brushed aside the value of his RMS simply were misled by its incomplete nature which, in my view, masked the deep scientific pertinence of its contents. The evidence accrued in Part III demonstrates that New England English was significantly different from the rising proto-RP London model and Part IV merely proves the working hypothesis proposed in the General Introduction, namely, that Franklin's RMS was founded on cultivated London English (cf. Polly Stevenson's role in this below).

Franklin's 1779 RMS treatise is indeed a rough draft and clearly incomplete (cf. the section on diphthongs, Chapter 27). Because negotiations with the royal authorities had reached an impasse, I explained that he was under tremendous stress during the summer of 1768 and that he probably experienced a bout of depression (Chapter 8, section 2.3). During a lull in activities, he turned to his project of reforming English orthography which he hoped would provide a writing system that would allow the illiterate underclasses to read and write "in a week's time", he argued. In this sense, he was very much following a tradition established by early English orthoepists before him (Chapter 13) (see also his successor, fellow Presbyterian and political radical, Thomas Spence (cf. Chapter 14).

In this part of the discussion (particularly in Chapters 25 through 27), I hope to have demonstrated that Franklin's understanding of articulatory phonetics was far more sophisticated than scholars have generally recognized. For instance, as we can see from Fig. 28.1 (reproduced below), his vocalic system follows a logical progression starting with central back /ɔ/, moving downward to /ɒ(:)/, then forward to low front /æ/, upwards to /i(:)/, etc. and finishing with central /ʌ/ (i.e. Franklin's [ʁ ~ ʁ̣]). Recall that the /ʌ/ phoneme for *Strut* words is based on London English pronunciation. Likewise, his systematic representation of *Meat* words as /i:/ in his RMS, rather than his New England /ɛ: ~ ɛ̣/ realization, is another demonstration of this. I reproduced the vowels in this figure exactly as he described them (without length marks for /u/ and /ɔ/). The superscript numbers indicate their order of presentation. We are left in no doubt that he fully understood the articulatory mechanisms of human speech, i.e. the notions of front vowels, central vowels, back vowels as well as high, low and mid vowels.

Fig. 28.1 Franklin's RMS vocalic system.



*The numbers in superscript represent the order of presentation in his tables (1768/1779)

Likewise, Fig. 28.3 (reproduced below) shows he had a well-conceived idea of his consonantal system which, like his vocalic system, also starts at the back of the vocal tract with glottal fricative /h/. From here he progressively works his way forward and ends with the voiced and voiceless bilabial stops and bilabial nasal /m/. Here too, the numbers in superscript indicate the order of presentation (cf. Chapter 28 for analysis).¹⁸

Figure 28.3 Franklin's RMS consonantal system

Franklin's consonant system							
	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Apico-alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Velar	Glottal
Nasals	/m/ ¹⁹			/n/ ⁶		/ŋ/ ⁵	
Trills				/r/ ⁷			
Stops				/t/ ⁸ , /d/ ⁹		/k/ ³ , /g/ ²	
Liquids	/p/ ¹⁸ , /b/ ¹⁷			/l/ ¹⁰			
Fricatives		/f/ ¹⁵ , /v/ ¹⁶	/θ/ ¹³ , /ð/ ¹⁴	/s/ ¹¹ , /z/ ¹²	/ʃ/ ⁴		/h/ ¹

Even if Franklin did not know the technical terms for stops, fricatives, etc. (although Wallis had invented a precise Latin terminology), given the way he presented these consonants, it is obvious that he intuitively understood concepts such as voiced and voiceless consonants which he described as “dense” “dull” or “thick” in the first case and “thin” in the second case. Furthermore, he distinguished voiced and voiceless consonants in all but one few cases (/ʃ/ ~ /ʒ/). He was befuddled by IPA /ʒ/, describing it as “French” and presenting it as an affricate /zʃ/. Nevertheless, given that he systematically presents voiced and voiceless consonants as minimal contrastive units of meaning, he must have intuitively understood how voicing/unvoicing served to distinguish phonemic boundaries.¹⁹

18 The passage from velar stops /g/, /k/ to /ʃ/ and /ŋ/ suggests that he did not distinguish between palato-alveolar and dorso-palatal/velar consonants viewing them all as “palatals.”

19 In Chapter 5, I compared Franklin's intuitive understanding of the phonemic structure of English (one of the two elements of André Martinet's *double articulation du langage* (1949), a fundamental principle of linguistics on which all languages are based, and compared it to the results of Franklin's experiment on the diffusion and expansion of oil on the surface of water (rather than mixing or absorption). The physicist Charles Tanford (2004) wrote a book on this experiment *Ben Franklin Stilled the Waves* showing that Franklin's descriptions of the phenomenon prove that Franklin was already thinking along same lines as modern molecular and atomic physicists, i.e. he had a primitive understanding of the existence of molecular and atomic particles (Cf. Franklin's 7 November 1773 letter to William Brownrigg, English physician and chemist (1712-1800)).

Contrary to Wise, I concluded that his /r/ was not an apical trill, as a literal description of one of his descriptions would suggest, but rather an approximant [ɹ] (cf. Chapter 27 for a detailed explanation).²⁰ Furthermore, based on an attentive reading of his description of /θ/ and /ð/, I found that his pronunciation was in fact a dental and not an inter-dental fricative as I had originally supposed. His descriptions of /s/ and /z/ also suggest that they may have had a lisping quality in his mind. These and many other important observations about his manner of pronunciation are given in Chapters 26, 27 and 28. Many of these details certainly reflect his own idiolect (for instance, considering initial <w> and <y> to be vowels).

As I have stated throughout, one of the central points of Franklin's orthographic system was that it was based on the concept of "one letter for one sound" and he scrupulously respected this rule. He expressed it this way: "It is also intended that there be no superfluous Letters used in spelling, i.e. no Letter that is not sounded" (Franklin, 1779, 469). He faithfully adhered to this rule and only violated it in one instance (cf. /zʃ/), but this was simply due to a misunderstanding of the nature of /z/ phoneme. To accomplish this goal, he had designed six new characters to avoid digraphs (cf. Chapter 25 for a full discussion). In the course of my research, I discovered that Franklin had had these characters cast at Watts' Printing House in London, where he had worked as a journeyman during the last months of his stay there in 1726, forty-two years previously. It was on this occasion he had met a few of his former workmates and, to thank them for their assistance, he bought his fellow-printers a gallon of sherry!

Polly Stevenson's Contributions to the RMS

One of the key findings in this book (Chapter 13, Volume I, and Chapter 25, Volume II) is that Franklin was not alone in conceiving and implementing his reform project and there can now be no doubt that he considered Polly Stevenson, a Londoner, born and bred in Kensington, to be not only his partner but also his informant. Franklin makes this evident in a number of his remarks in his September 28th letter, but this is especially clear in Franklin's July 20th 1768 letter to Polly Stevenson in which he overtly asks her to identify any incompatibilities she might find between the 26 characters in his RMS alphabet, his descriptions of his twenty-six characters and her own London English pronunciation. As I pointed out, this evidence was not available to linguists who studied the RMS. I cited this as further proof that Franklin sought to base his system on London English (cf. his linguistic insecurity above). It is very probable that they had

²⁰ And as I initially believed!

discussed questions of pronunciation on previous occasions and that Polly may have pointed out aspects of his provincial pronunciation that she found unacceptable (cf. New Englandisms but features that came across as English provincialisms).²¹ Significantly, the differences in Franklin and Stevenson's transcriptions of common words are very minor and is another argument suggesting that the RMS was London based.

Nevertheless, Stevenson's initial reaction (September 26th) to his RMS proposal was highly critical and she stated that it would be difficult to implement for a variety of practical reasons (cf. Chapter 25). However, we saw that, by 1775, shortly after Franklin's return to Philadelphia, she had completely changed her opinion and she writes the following:

As I reckon you are soon to be sovereigne, and lawgiver in the Empire of America,
*I pray you establish your alphabet that my grandchildren may attain the rudiments
 of learning more easily* (my italics).

In an interesting twist, a few lines later she also claims ownership of the alphabet writing "I find that by *our alphabet* I can convey a new sound to you with precision, which it would be impossible to do by the common rule of spelling, so my *uncommon* learning is useful."

Because the Revolutionary War raged on from 1775 to 1781 and the Treaty of Paris²² recognizing the independence of the United States was not signed until 1783, Franklin did not receive this letter until 1785, a full ten years after it had been written. This was only a year prior to his meeting with Noah Webster to discuss their plan to relaunch his alphabetical reform. In Chapter 30 (section 1.5), I proposed that these few lines from Polly may have encouraged Franklin to seek a protégé who would launch a spelling reform in America. It is perhaps no accident that he saw in Webster a man who might finally implement his orthographic reform... As we saw in Chapter 29, Part V (Volume II), Webster had published his very successful first edition of *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language* in 1783 and, in Franklin's eyes, he must have seemed the ideal candidate to carry out this ambitious project. As he explained in his *Autobiography*, Franklin believed that if one wants a useful project to succeed, it is often necessary to give others the credit for it! To some degree, I believe that this is what he intended to do in this case. Nevertheless, as we saw in Chapters 29 and 30, the two men had differing ideas about which model of pronunciation the American people should adopt. I proposed that, despite Webster's genuine admiration for Franklin and his accomplishments, this specific topic was probably a source of tension and irritation for Webster who wanted to promote

21 Polly Stevenson's mother was Franklin's landlady and she had become a surrogate daughter for him during his long stay in London.

22 In Chapter 9, we saw that Franklin played a critical role in these negotiations.

an American model of pronunciation, that is, one based on what he considered to be an older, “purer” English pronunciation which, he firmly believed, had been best preserved in New England.

Considering the humiliations Franklin had suffered before the Privy Council and the House of Lords, as well as the great bitterness regarding a war he considered both unnecessary and unnecessarily brutal (see his and Lafayette’s list of “British cruelties,” 1779), I initially wondered whether, by the time of his death, Franklin may have been swayed by Webster’s arguments regarding an American linguistic “declaration of independence.” All indications are, however, that he was not and that his views regarding the English language and culture, like those of most of his American compatriots, remained firmly heteronomous (like the Québécois today with regard to the standard French of France (cf. the “dictionary wars,” Chapter 30)).

New Englandisms in the RMS

In Chapter 25, I indicated that, while searching for Stevenson and Franklin’s correspondence in the American Philosophical Society’s online archives, I came across a digital image of Franklin’s original July 20th 1768 letter to Polly Stevenson.²³ At that time, I was unaware it had survived or that it had already been published by Willcox (1972) in his *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*. In this same collection, I also discovered Polly Stevenson’s original September 26th manuscript response to Franklin’s first letter as well as Franklin’s original vowel and consonant table, complete with his new characters and descriptions of each of them.

Given that Wise (1948) is the last linguist to have proposed a serious, detailed article on the RMS (but one based on Jared Sparks’ 1838 edition, not Vaughan’s), no linguist has ever had access to either of these original documents. For the first time, the reader will find the digital images of the Vaughan’s entire 1779 edition of Franklin’s RMS (Appendix 1). Appendix 2 containing Franklin’s original 1768 vowel and consonant table as well as the 1768 and 1779 versions of Franklin’s and Stevenson’s correspondence, all accompanied by my IPA transcriptions. This includes Franklin’s original July 20, 1768 manuscript letter (never previously analyzed phonetically), as well as a draft of Stevenson’s September 26th response. The American Philosophical Society archivist informed me that the manuscript version of Franklin’s September 28th letter found in Vaughan’s edition has been lost (cf. Acknowledgements). Nevertheless, see my notes at the bottom of Steven’s September 26th draft copy. Finally, Appendix 3 includes the first full glossary ever compiled of Franklin and Stevenson’s transcriptions, and

23 Cf. Islandora Repository Text Collection, Mss B.F85.bra-James S Frances Bradford Collection.

accompanying IPA equivalents (442 words).

The contents of the original 1768 manuscript documents are presented in detail in Chapter 25 and are systematically compared with Vaughan's 1779 edition. This is the first study of its kind. Furthermore, a close investigation of the original manuscript versions of Franklin's July 20th letter and Stevenson's September 26th letter show that both were novices in the use of the new alphabet. Franklin, for instance, made over twenty transcription errors in this first letter, many of which he corrects in the body of his letter (cf. Appendix 2). This alone may explain why he did not want Vaughan to publish it. Unless another copy of this letter was in his possession, given that this letter remained in Polly Stevenson's possession until her death in Bristol, Pennsylvania in 1795, it is not even certain that Vaughan was ever aware of its existence. Her own manuscript letter was exceedingly sloppy and, for this reason, I initially suspected that it was only a draft copy that she had never sent to Franklin and, yet, there was a seal on it with Franklin's address.

Chapter 28 (§1.1-1.19, Part V, Volume II) is certainly one of the most important in the entire book given that it identifies a wide range of New England phonological features that have crept surreptitiously into his RMS transcriptions, largely through inadvertence and are found not only in his July 20th letter but even in his much-improved September 28th letter. These have never been identified as "Americanisms" before (cf. below). Nevertheless, for the reasons explained in Part II and Part III, in each case these features can be traced back, in one way or another, to dialects of England, mainly areas close to London and, more generally, to the Southeast and East Midlands.

Since I have provided a full list of Franklin's erroneous transcriptions in this same chapter, I shall only give a few examples. The first of these show a lack of palatalization which was typical of New England English: **aktuali** ['æktuali] "actually," **graduali** ['gɹæduali] "gradually" (two examples), **kaantinali** [kɒn'tinuali] "continually." These show a lack of palatalization that is typical of early 17th-century English pronunciations as well and can be observed in Dryden and Pope writing (*picter*, *nater* for *picture* and *nature*). See also Webster's criticisms of the modern palatalized realizations of such words, which he associates with Virginia.

Git and **frind** also offer examples of the *pin-pen* merger, features that were also typical of 18th-century England as well as Massachusetts and the American colonies more generally. We have seen that, today, this is associated with the American Southeast. Now it is associated primarily with the American South. On one occasion, he spells "learned" **larn'd** [læɪnd] rather than **lyrn'd** [lɛɪnd] (cf. **lyrn** and **lyrnin** in the same Sept. 28th letter) showing the older [æ:ɪ] realization of that word was natural realization of the word. The two latter examples shows his centralization of the vowel before [ɪ], which I have suggested may have been

a reflection of Stevenson's innovative lower-middle-class pronunciation.

One final example is Franklin's transcription of "perfectly" *perfektli*, literally, [pɛɪfɛktləi] (July 20th letter), but also *hyryi* [hɪɪi] with a base form of *hyryi* [hɪɪi]. These two examples correspond impeccably with a rhyme found in the first poem Franklin published in 1719 in his brother James' newspaper, the *New England Courant*: *die* [dɪi] ~ *manfully* [mænɸələi]. This demonstrates that he retained the archaic [ɪ ~ əi] realization of unstressed -ly, -y and -ity words till the end of his life (John Hart, 1569, pronounced these [ɛi], cf. Chapter 16). Because he was only thirteen when he composed it, there can be little doubt that this reflects his native Boston pronunciation, and it appears certain that he continued pronouncing these words in this way until the end of his days. He gives many other rhymes of this kind in his *Poor Richard's Almanack* proving this point (cf. Chapter 16). Furthermore, his transcription of *perfektli* also shows that he also retained the [ɛɪ] pronunciation typical of polite London, Boston and Philadelphia pronunciation. Yet, in his September 28th letter, he "corrects" his transcription of "perfectly" to *pyrfektli* [pɛɪfɛktli] which, once again, may be a sign of Polly Stevenson's innovative influence.

The identification of such a significant number of Franklin's New Englandisms in his RMS transcriptions in this relatively small corpus could not have been achieved without the analysis presented in Part III, which highlights all of the features (and many others) that were current in 18th-century New England, a koine which had retained quite a number archaic 17th-century characteristics and corresponds to the examples just cited. If so, this would seem to confirm the relative solidity of the theoretical and methodological framework presented in Parts II.

The evidence assembled in Part IV demonstrates that, despite Franklin's best efforts, his accent must have remained quite rustic and provincial to Londoners (hence his need of Polly's assistance). Then again, his accent may not have appeared broader than the accents of other middle-class English merchants and artisans from rural England. Indeed, I found no evidence that Franklin's Boston/Philadelphia-influenced accent was perceived to be "un-English" by Londoners or Englishmen from other regions. References to American "barbarisms" that I have found occur far more frequently after the Revolution and refer almost exclusively to lexical items. We saw that Franklin was also sensitive to these kinds of Americanisms or "barbarisms," as they were called by both Englishmen and Americans alike (Chapter 14, Part II, Volume I and Chapter 30, Part V, Volume II).

Nevertheless, as one would expect, the most crucial evidence demonstrating that Franklin's RMS is indeed based on London English derives from linguistic facts that are summarized in Chapter 28. For instance, Fig. 28.7 compares Franklin's RMS scheme (minus the New Englandisms) to the models proposed

by Kenrick (1773), Nares (1784) and Walker (1791). If my analysis of their phonological systems is accurate, the remarkable concordance between Franklin's RMS and the three London orthoepists' clashes with the 17th- and 18th-century "American" phonological system(s) outlined for New England in Chapter 24, a system that tallies well with those of the middle and southern colonies more generally. I discussed Mazarin's surprise when he noted the difference between the conservative speech of 18th-century Massachusettsans and the innovative pronunciations recorded in Franklin's RMS which led him to conclude that Franklin "spoke like a Londoner"! Although clearly puzzled, by recognizing this distinction, Mazarin has unconsciously carried the discussion further than any previous researcher. In Part III of this book, we identified the features of Franklin's Boston pronunciation thus demonstrating that he did indeed retain his Massachusetts accent, even after decades of living in Philadelphia and London. In Part IV, we showed that the ultimate goal of his RMS was to offer all inhabitants of the British Empire a model of pronunciation that was based on educated London English, not on his own idiolect as all previous linguists have supposed. Just as importantly, by concluding that Franklin spoke like a Londoner, linguists have also assumed that New Englanders, and settlers from the other colonies also spoke forms of English that were largely standardized. The observations by 18th-century English travellers contributed to this exaggerated conclusion.

In the end, the RMS reveals a clear but only partially successful attempt by Franklin to replicate the cultivated London English that he heard around him in 1768. His linguistic fidelity to the London model at this time can only be explained by his passionate belief and hope at this time that America would remain an integral part of a rapidly expanding British Empire (cf. Chapters 6-9). Finally, if one accepts the conclusions presented in Parts III and IV, one can then imagine distinct American-English koines, hence an emerging American linguistic identity as early as 1700-1725. We also saw that regional differences were recognizable to Americans by this time, if not to visiting English gentlemen (Chapter 12).

Franklin's Linguistic Legacy

Throughout this book I have highlighted Franklin's friendship with Sir William Jones, Joseph Priestley (who wrote a famous English grammar, cf. Chapter 29), Richard Price and others who belonged to the Club of Honourable Whigs and who met bi-monthly to discuss scientific, philosophical, literary and, no doubt, linguistic matters. It is certain, for instance, that Jones had read the RMS. In his *Dissertation on the Orthography of Asiatick Words in Roman Letters*, we saw that he, like Webster, actually criticized Franklin's idea of substituting new

characters for digraphs, thus violating the concept of the older orthoepistic rule of “one letter for one sound.” It may be that Webster had also read Jones’ book, perhaps on Franklin’s recommendation (cf. footnote 14 above). Jones’ book was published in 1786, the same year he met Franklin in Philadelphia. In fact, if he did, and I suspect it was the case on account of the nature of the first chapter of his *Dissertations* (pp. 41-67) in which he includes a detailed history of the languages of Great Britain, Webster may have preferred Jones’ less radical approach to orthographic reform. Nevertheless, I argued that Franklin’s RMS may have tried to convince him to imagine his own phonetic alphabet.

Additional proof that he had studied the RMS is seen in Jones’ decision to transcribe the same stanza of Addison’s “Campaign” cited by Franklin, celebrating the Duke of Marlborough’s great victory over Louis XIV at Blenheim. Franklin’s uncle Benjamin had also written a long poem celebrating English victory at Blenheim and I have interpreted this to have been a code between Whigs and radicals enabling them to (not so) discretely criticize the excesses of their own monarchs without facing retribution. The inclusion of this stanza in his *Dissertation* could not possibly have been accidental, and I see this as a subtle acknowledgement of Franklin’s friendship and influence on him (cf. their correspondence in Chapter 29).

It is in this same book that Jones proposed not only an English phonetic alphabet but another one for transcribing “Asiatick” languages (i.e. Arabic, Sanskrit, Persian). It is also in this publication that he expresses his famous hypothesis that Sanskrit, Greek and Latin emanated from a common mother tongue that has since been lost (now called Proto-Indo-European). This statement is often cited as marking the beginning of Indo-European studies as well as comparative and historical linguistics more generally. Mazarin is the only linguist I know of who has perceived Franklin’s influence on Jones when he writes “Inspired by ‘Dr. Franklin’, Sir William Jones inaugurated the principle that we still use for Romanizing words like yoga, sushi, and Chekhov – namely, to spell consonants as in English but vowels as in Italian” (Mazarin, 2020). This is a highly significant principle that was later adopted by the IPA.

In recognition of Jones’ contribution, Burridge (2013) argued that he should be considered as one of the forerunners of the IPA. In this, she is no doubt justified but, as I argued in Chapter 29, if this is the case, Franklin also deserves credit for his own efforts and for his apparent influence on Jones. Having said that, I have also argued that, thanks to the identification of Franklin’s orthoepist sources (Chapter 13), it would be fairer to consider Jones and Franklin as being at the tail end of a long line of reformers going back to Sir Thomas Smith. Sadly, all of these orthoepists’ attempts to modernize English spelling ended in failure. In my view, John Hart, John Wilkins and Francis Lodwick are the three scholars who best deserve the honour of being considered as the forefathers of the IPA.

Hart (1569) used his alphabet to transcribe not only English but also French and, in my humble opinion, his orthographic system was superior to that imagined by either Franklin or Jones. Wilkins' *An Essay Towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language* was clearly intended to serve as a universal cross-language writing system. The third is Lodwick, the author of *Essay towards an Universal Alphabet* (1686). The studies of the last two scholars were the first of which I am aware that were expressly designed to offer a common alphabet for all the world's languages.

Finally, I suggested a more tenuous connection between Franklin and Alexander Ellis (1869) who, as we have seen, studied Franklin's RMS in minute detail (as well as Webster's *Dissertations*). Ellis' dialectal Paleotype alphabet deeply influenced Henry Sweet's Romic alphabet (1877) which, in turn, served as the basis for the IPA and, for this reason, I suggested the possibility, admittedly unsubstantiated, that Franklin's novel idea of applying the continental European vocalic system (i.e. French, Italian, Spanish) to transcribe his RMS English vowels may have had some direct or indirect influence on Ellis to do the same, hence, Franklin's <i>, <e>, <a>, <o>, <u>, <æ> corresponding directly to IPA /i/, /ɛ/, /æ/, /ɔ/, /u/, /ɒ ~ ɑ/. Sweet would have had no difficulty persuading Paul Passy, a French speaker, and co-founder of the IPA, of the logic and wisdom of this choice. Having said this, Ellis was a brilliant linguist and mathematician who probably would have come to this conclusion on his own.

Throughout this entire discussion we have seen that Franklin's influence on Webster is undeniable. The evidence to this effect is particularly abundant in Webster's *Dissertations on the English Language*. I have asked previously whether Franklin would have given Webster his six new characters and all of his notes (which included the name of Sir Thomas Smith and presumably the names of other English orthoepists cited by Webster on p. 394 of his *Dissertations*, 1789), if he had known that Webster would *not* have adopted his London-based RMS model. In Chapters 29 and 30, we explored the reasons Webster deplored what he called the London "dialect," namely, his anger that a small, unrepresentative body of aristocrats at the English court, and stage actors such as Sheridan and Walker, should have the authority to impose innovative (i.e. for him, "corrupt") pronunciations on the mass of the English-speaking population in both America and provincial Britain and Ireland.

This must be one of the main reasons Webster rejected Franklin's London-based RMS and attempted to launch his own system (cf. Chapters 29 and 30). Although Webster dedicated this book to Franklin and praised him for having convinced him to launch a spelling reform, in the very first letter he addressed to Franklin on May 24, 1786, he clearly announces that he had no intention of adopting a spelling system based on new characters, i.e. one letter for one sound. I also proposed that Webster probably hoped to present himself as Franklin's

protégé, which he indeed was. Considering Franklin's immense prestige and popularity, he must have hoped that this connection would ensure his reputation as America's preeminent lexicographer, thus guaranteeing the future success, not only of his own spelling reform but also his "American" dictionaries of English. In the end, we saw that Webster was, first and foremost, a lexicologist, not a phonetician, and his spelling proposals were mocked and ridiculed by his fellow Americans who, like Franklin himself, continued to adhere to traditional orthography and the London English model of pronunciation (cf. Worcester and the "dictionary wars," Chapter 30).

As I have stated on several occasions, after the Revolution, Franklin considered Americanness to be intimately bound to the ideals of political Whiggism, religious independence from the Church of England and freedom from an oppressive monarchy. We also saw that he had strong but largely silent support for his struggle from many like-minded progressives back in Britain. Nevertheless, in the minds of most Americans, London remained the linguistic, literary, cultural and scientific centre of the English-speaking world. Their quarrel was not with England or Great Britain but rather a despotic monarchical system that they viewed as having been founded on the oppression of the underclasses (Part I, Chapters 1-9).

In the end, although it was clearly Franklin who inspired Webster to pursue his efforts to modernize English orthography, it is equally certain that Franklin would have been appalled by the final outcome of his spelling reform. Again, if Webster is now credited with being the father of American orthography, for better or for worse, it would be fitting to consider Franklin as its unwilling godfather.

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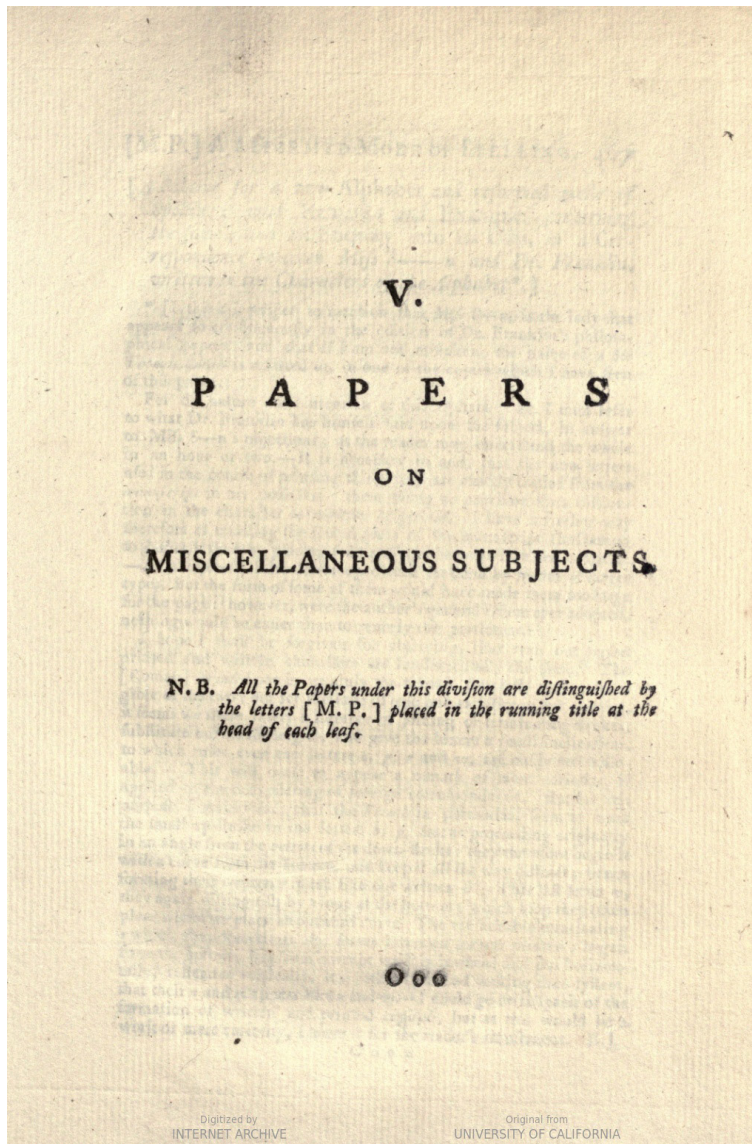
Appendix 1:

Franklin's *Reformed Mode of Spelling*

(Vaughan's 1779 Edition, pp. 467-478)

Herein the reader will find chapter 5 of Benjamin Vaughan's *Political, Miscellaneous and Philosophical Pieces Written by Benjamin Franklin*, printed for J. Johnson, n° 72, Saint Paul's Churchyard, London, MDCCLXXIX, entitled "Papers on Miscellaneous Subjects" and subtitled *A Reformed Mode of Spelling*, Part IV (Chapters 25-28) is entirely based on this document and on the original manuscript version preserved in the Archives of the American Philosophical Society (cf. Appendix 2).

To my knowledge, this is the first publication in which the original document has been reproduced. This was made possible with the kind permission of the Internet Archives, University of California Digital Library, Hathitrust, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc2.ark:/13960/t5v698v1d>. My special thanks to Ms. Miranda Bennett, Director of Shared Collections, University of California for her assistance.



[M.P.] A REFORMED MODE OF SPELLING. 467

[*A Scheme for a new Alphabet and reformed mode of Spelling; with Remarks and Examples concerning the same; and an Enquiry into its Uses, in a Correspondence between Miss S——n and Dr. Franklin, written in the Characters of the Alphabet^{re}.*]

* [I think it proper to mention that Miss S——n, is the lady that appears so conspicuously in the edition of Dr. Franklin's philosophical papers: and that if I am not mistaken, the name of a Sir Thomas Smith is referred to, in one of the copies which I have seen of this paper.]

For the nature and intention of this alphabet, &c. I must refer to what Dr. Franklin has himself said upon the subject, in answer to Miss S——n's objections; as the reader may understand the whole in an hour or two.—It is necessary to add, that the new letters used in the course of printing this paper, are exactly copied from the *manuscript* in my possession; there being no provision for a distinction in the character as *written* or *printed*. I have no other way therefore of marking the scored parts of the manuscript (answering to *italics*;) than by placing such passages between inverted commas.—As to *capitals*, I should have provided for them by means of larger types, but the form of some of them would have made them too large for the page: however, were the author's general system ever adopted, nothing would be easier than to remedy this particular.

I hope I shall be forgiven for observing, that even our *present* printed and written characters are fundamentally the same. The [Roman] *printed* one is certainly the neatest, simplest, and most legible of the two; but for the sake of ease and rapidity in our *writing*, it seems we there insert a number of joining or terminating strokes, substitute curves for angles, and give the letters a small inclination, to which rules even the letters *a*, *g*, *r* and *wo*, are easily reconcilable. — This will cease to appear a remark of mere curiosity, if applied to the decyphering of foreign correspondence. But for this purpose I would add, that the *French* in particular, seem to treat the small up-stroke in the letters *b*, *p*, &c. as proceeding originally in an angle from the *bottom* of the down-stroke: they therefore begin it with a curve from the bottom, and keep it all the way distinct; hence forming their written *r* much like our written *v*. This last letter *v*, they again distinguish by a loop at the bottom; which loop they often place where we place an outward curve. The remarkable terminating *s* which they sometimes use, seems intended for our printed *s* begun from the bottom, but from corrupt writing inverted and put horizontally, instead of vertically. It is rather from bad writing than system, that their *n* and *m* appear like *u* and *wo*.—I could go on to speak of the formation of written and printed *capitals*, but as this would be a work of mere curiosity, I leave it for the reader's amusement. E.]

O o o z.

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REMARKS [on the Alphabetical Table].

o { It is endeavoured to give the Alphabet
 to { a *more natural Order*; Beginning first
 y huh { with the simple Sounds formed by the
 { Breath, with none or very little help of
 { Tongue, Teeth, and Lips; and produced
 { chiefly in the Windpipe.

g k { Then coming forward to those,
 { formed by the Roof of the Tongue next
 { to the Windpipe.

r n { Then to those, formed more forward,
 t d { by the forepart of the Tongue against the
 { Roof of the Mouth.

l { Then those, formed still more for-
 s z { ward in the Mouth, by the Tip of the
 { Tongue applied first to the Roots of the
 { upper Teeth.

h th { Then to those, formed by the Tip
 dh { of the Tongue applied to the Ends or
 { Edges of the upper Teeth.

f { Then to those, formed still more for-
 v { ward by the under Lip applied to the
 { upper Teeth.

b { Then to those, formed yet more for-
 p { ward by the upper and under Lip open-
 { ing to let out the sounding Breath.

m { And lastly, ending with the shutting
 { up of the Mouth, or closing the Lips
 { while any Vowel is sounding.

3

In

[M.P.] Remarks [on the Alphabetical Table.] 469

In this Alphabet *c* is omitted as unnecessary; *k* supplying its hard Sound, and *s* the soft.—The jod *j* is also omitted, its Sound being supplied by the new Letter *ſi*, *iſh*, which ſerves other purpoſes, aſſiſting in the formation of other ſounds;—thus the *ſi* with a *d* before it, gives the ſound of the jod *j* and ſoft *g*, as in “James, January, “giant, gentle,” “*dſieems, dſianueri, dſiyiant, “dſientel* ;” with a *t* before it, it gives the Sound of *ch*, as in “Cherry, Chip,” “*tſieri, tſhip* ;” and with an *z* before it the French ſound of the jod *j*, as in “jamais,” “*zſiame*.”

Thus the *g* has no longer *two different* Sounds, which occaſioned Confuſion; but is, as every Letter ought to be, confined to one;—The ſame is to be obſerved in *all* the Letters, Vowels, and Conſonants, that wherever they are met with, or in whatever Company, their Sound is always the ſame.—It is alſo intended that there be *no ſuperfluous* Letters uſed in ſpelling; i. e. no Letter that is not founded;—And this Alphabet, by ſix new Letters, provides that there be no diſtinct Sounds in the Language *without Letters* to expreſs them. As to the difference between *ſhort and long Vowels*, it is naturally expreſſed by a ſingle Vowel where ſhort, a double one where long; as for “mend” write “mend,” but for “remain’d” write “remeen’d;”

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“remeen’d;” for “did” write “diid,” but for “deed” write “diid,” † &c.

What in our common Alphabet is supposed the third Vowel, *i*, as we found it, is as a *Diphthong*; consisting of two of our Vowels joined; [viz.] *u* as founded in “into,” and *i* in its true Sound: Any one will be sensible of this, who sounds those two Vowels *u* *i* quick after each other; the Sound begins *u* and ends *i*. The true Sound of the *i* is that we now give to *e* in the words “deed,” “keep,”—*.

† [Though a single vowel appears to be put in the Table for *did* and *deed* equally, yet in the Remarks [ABOVE] the latter is made to require two *i* s. Perhaps the same doubling of the vowel is meant for *name* and *lane*; for certainly *name* is not pronounced as *nem*, in the expression *nem. con.* corresponding to the sound in *men*.—Some critics may probably think that these two sets of sounds are so distinct as to require different characters to express them: since in *mem*, pronounced affectedly for *ma’am* (*madam*) and corresponding in sound to *men*, the lips are kept close to the teeth, and perpendicular to each other; but in *maim*, corresponding in sound to *name*, the lips are placed poutingly and flat towards each other: A remark that might be applied with little variation to *did* and *deed* compared.—As this is a subject I have never much examined, it becomes me only to add, that spelling may be considered as “an analysis of the operations of the organs of speech, where each separate letter has to represent a “different movement;” and that among these organs of speech, we are to enumerate the epiglottis; and perhaps even the lungs themselves, not merely as furnishing air for sound, but as modifying the sound of that air both in *inbaling* and expelling it. E.]

* [The copy from which this is printed, ends in the same abrupt way with the above, followed by a considerable blank space; so that more perhaps was intended to be added by our author. E.]

TABLE

[TABLE of the REFORM		
<i>Sounded</i> [respectively] as in [the Words in the Column below.]		
Characters.		Names of Letters as written.
<i>o</i>	Old.	
* <i>a</i>	John, Folly ; Awl, Ball.	
<i>a</i>	Man, can.	
<i>e</i>	Men, lend, Name, Lane.	
<i>i</i>	Did, Sin, Deed, seen.	
<i>u</i>	Tool, Fool, Rule.	
* <i>y</i>	um, un; as in umbrage, unto, &c. and as in <i>er</i> .	
<i>b</i>	hunter, happy, high.	
<i>g</i>	give, gather.	
<i>k</i>	keep, kick.	
* <i>ſh</i>	(ſh) Ship, wiſh.	
* <i>ng</i>	(ng) ing, repeating, among.	
<i>n</i>	end.	
<i>r</i>	Art.	
<i>t</i>	Teeth.	
<i>d</i>	Deed.	
<i>l</i>	ell, tell.	
<i>f</i>	Eſſence.	
<i>ez</i>	(ez) Wages.	
* <i>h</i>	(th) think.	
* <i>dh</i>	(dh) thy.	
<i>f</i>	Effect.	
<i>v</i>	ever:	
<i>b</i>	Bees.	
<i>p</i>	peep.	
<i>m</i>	ember.	

ARMED ALPHABET.]

To face p. 470.

[Manner of pronouncing the Sounds.]

Names of Letters as expressed in the reformed Sounds and Characters.	
<i>o</i>	The first VOWEL naturally, and deepest sound; requires only to open the mouth, and breathe through it.
<i>a</i>	The next requiring the mouth opened a little, or hollower.
<i>a</i>	The next, a little more.
<i>e</i>	The next requires the <i>Tongue</i> to be a little more elevated.
<i>i</i>	The next still more.
<i>u</i>	The next requires the <i>Lips</i> to be gathered up, leaving a small opening.
<i>y</i>	The next a very short Vowel, the Sound of which we should express in our present Letters thus, <i>ub</i> ; a short, and not very strong <i>Aspiration</i> .
<i>bub</i>	A stronger or more forcible aspiration.
<i>gi</i>	The first CONSONANT; being formed by the <i>Root of the Tongue</i> ; this is the present hard <i>g</i> .
<i>ki</i>	A kindred sound; a little more acute; to be used instead of the hard <i>c</i> .
<i>ib</i>	A new letter, wanted in our language; our <i>sb</i> , separately taken, not being proper elements of the sound.
<i>ing</i>	A new letter, wanted for the same reason;---These are formed <i>back in the mouth</i> .
<i>en</i>	Formed <i>more forward</i> in the mouth; the <i>Tip of the Tongue</i> to the <i>Roof</i> of the mouth.
<i>r</i>	The same; the tip of the tongue a little loose or separate from the roof of the mouth, and vibrating.
<i>ti</i>	The tip of the tongue more forward; touching, and then leaving, the roof.
<i>di</i>	The same; touching a little fuller.
<i>el</i>	The same; touching just about the <i>gums</i> of the <i>upper teeth</i> .
<i>es</i>	This sound is formed, by the breath passing <i>between</i> the moist end of the <i>tongue</i> and the <i>upper teeth</i> .
<i>ex</i>	The same; a little denser and duller.
<i>eh</i>	The tongue under, and a little <i>behind</i> , the upper teeth; touching them, but so as to let the breath pass between.
<i>eh</i>	The same; a little fuller.
<i>ef</i>	Formed by the <i>lower lip</i> against the upper teeth.
<i>ev</i>	The same; fuller and duller.
<i>b</i>	The <i>lips</i> full together, and opened as the air passes out.
<i>pi</i>	The same; but a thinner sound.
<i>em</i>	The <i>closing</i> of the lips, while the <i>e</i> [here annexed] is sounding.

distinguish them, and shew how few new sounds are proposed, E.]

INTERNET ARCHIVE

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

[M. P.] EXAMPLES. 471

Examples [of writing in this Character.]

So buen sym Endſiel, byi divyin kcamand,
 Uih ryizin tempeſts ſeeks e gilty Land;
 (Syth az av leet or peel Britania paſt,)
 Kalm and ſerūn hi dryvros hi ſeuriys blaſt;
 And, pluiz'd h' almyitis cardyrs tu
 pyrfarm,
 Ryids in hi Huyrhuind and dyirekts hi
 Starm.

So hi piur limpid ſtriim, buen ſcaul uih ſteens
 av ryſin Tarents and diſendin Reens,
 Uyrks itſelf kliir; and az it ryys riſyins;
 Til byi digriis, he ſlotin miryr ſyins,
 Riſlektis iitſi ſcaur hat an its bardyr groz,
 And e nu bev'n in its ſeer Byzym floz.

Kensytyn,

472 A REFORMED MODE OF SPELLING.

Kenshtyn, Septembyr 26, 1768.

Dür Syr,

yi hav transkryib'd iur alfabet, &c. buitfi yi hink myit bi cwo syrvis tu hoz, bu uifi ta akuyir an akiuret pronynsiefiyn, if hat kuld bi fixs'd; byt yi si meni inkcan-viinienfis, az uel az difikyltis, hat uuld atend hi briniyn iur letyrs and arhcagrafi intu kamyn ius. cal cur etimalodfiiz uuld be last, kansfikuentli ui kuld nat asyrtien hi miiniyn cwo meni uyrds; hi distinkfiyn, tu, bituiin uyrds cwo difyrent miiniyn and similar scaund uuld bi insles, ynles ui liviyn rynters pyblifi nu iidifiyns. In fiart yi biliw ui myst let piipil spel can in heer old ue, and (az ui fyind it iisfiest) du hi seem curselves.—With ease and with sincerity I can, in the old way, subscribe myself, Dear Sir,

Your faithful and affectionate Servant,

M. S.

Dr. Franklin.

[M. P.] *An Inquiry into its Uses, &c.* 473

[Answer to Miss S****.]

Dür Madam,

*hi abdfiekfiyn iu meek to rektifyiyn cur
alfabet, "hat it uil bi atended uih inkcanvi-
"nienfiz and difkyltiz," iz e natural uyn;
far it caluaz akyrz buen eni refarmefiyn
iz propozed; buehyr in rilidfiyn, gyvern-
ment, laz, and iwen dcaun az lo az rods
and buil karidfiiz.—hi tru kuestfiyn hen,
is ncat buehyr haer uil bi no difkyltiz ar
inkcanviniensiz; byt bueher hi difkyltiz
mé ncat bi fyrmaunted; and buehyr hi
kanviniensiz uil ncat, can hi huol, bi grétyr
han hi inkcanviniensiz. In his kes, hi dif-
kyltiz er onli in hi biginiy caw hi praktis:
buen h'e er uyns ovyrkym, hi advantedfiex*

P P P

er

474 A REFORMED MODE OF SPELLING.

er lastin. — To yihyr iu car mi, bu spel uel in
 hi prezent mod, yi imadfin hi difkylti caw
 tsiendfin hat mod far hi nu, iz nat so grét,
 byt hat ui myit purfektli git ovyr it in a
 wiiks ryitiñ. — Az to hoz bu du nat spel uel,
 if hi tu difkyltiz er kympérd, [viz.] hat caw
 tiufin hem tru speliñ in hi prezent mod,
 and hat caw tiufin hem hi nu alfabet and hi
 nu speliñ akcardiñ to it; yi am kanfident
 hat hi latyr uuld bi byi far hi list. Hē
 natyrali fal into hi nu mehyd alredi, az
 mytst az hi imperfektiñ caw her alfabet
 wil admit caw; her prezent bad speliñ iz
 onli bad, bikaz kantreri to hi prezent bad
 ruls: yndyr hi nu ruls it uuld bi gud.
 — hi difkylti caw lyрни to spel uel in
 hi old ué iz so grét, hat fu atén it;
 heuzands and heuzands ryitiñ can to old
 edfi, without ever biñ ebił to akuyir
 it. Tiz, bisyidz, e difkylti kantinuall
 inkriifin; az hi saund graduali veriz
 mor and mor fream hi speliñ: and to
 farenyr

[M. P.] *An Inquiry into its Uses, &c.* A 475

farenys $\dagger$ it méks $\dagger$ hi lurnin to pronouns
aur languedfi, az riten in aur buks, almost
impasibil.

Nau az to " $\dagger$ hi inkarnimienfz" in men-
fyn.— $\dagger$ hi fyrst iz; $\dagger$ hat " $\dagger$ aat aur etimca-
" $\dagger$ lodfiz uuld bi laft, kanfikuentli ui kuld
" $\dagger$ nat afyrteen hi minin av meni uyrds."
—etimcalodfiz er at present veri ynfyrtien;
byt fytth az hé er, $\dagger$ hi old buks uuld ftl
prizyrv hem, and etimcalodfists uuld hér
fyind hem. Uyrds in $\dagger$ hi kors av tyim,
thendfi her minins, az uel az her spelin
and pronynfiefyn; and ui du nat luk to
etimcalodfi far her present minins. If
yi fould kal e man e Neev and e Vilen,

$\dagger$ [Dr. Franklin used to lay some little stress on this circumstance, when he occasionally spoke on the subject. 'A dictionary formed on this model would have been serviceable to him, he said, even as an *American*;' because from the want of public examples of pronunciation in his own country, it was often difficult to learn the proper sound of certain words, which occurred very frequently in our English writings, and which of course every American very well understood as to their meaning.

I think I have seen a French grammar, which endeavoured to represent the French pronunciation, by a resolution of it into English letters; but for want of proper characters, it seemed an embarrassed business.—Is not the bad spelling observed in French manuscripts, owing in some degree to the great variance between their orthography and pronunciation? E.]

P p p 2

bi

476 A REFORMED MODE OF SPELLING. M

bi uuld hardli bi satisfyd uih myi teliu
 him, hat uyn æv hi uyrds oridfinali
 fignifyd onli e lad ær fyrvant; and hi
 yhyr, an yndyr plauman, ær hi inhabitant
 æv e viledfi. It iz fram prexent iusedfi
 onli, hi miiniu æv uyrds iz to bi dityr-
 mined.

Iur sekynð inkærviniens iz, hat “hi dif-
 “ tinkfyn bituin uyrds æv difyrent miiniu
 “ and fimilar faund uuld bi diftræyid.” —
 hat diftinkfyn iz ælredi diftræyid in pro-
 nœunfyn hem; and ui rilyi æn hi fens alon
 æv hi sentens to afyrteen, huitfi æv hi fæveral
 uyrds, fimilar in faund, ui intend. If his
 iz fuffiient in hi rapiditi æv difkors, it uil
 bi mutfi mor fo in riten sentenses; huitfi
 mē bi red lexfiurli; and atended to mor
 partikularli in kes æv diffikylti, han ui kan
 atend to e paft sentens, buyil e fpikyur iz
 byryiun ys ælæy uih nu uyns.

Iur hyrd inkærviniens iz, hat “æal hi
 “ buks ælredi riten uuld bi iufles.” — his in-
 kærviniens

[M. P.] *An Inquiry into its Uses, &c.* 477

kanviniens uuld onli kym can graduali, in
e kors caw edfies. Iu and yi, and yhyr
ncaw lwoy ridyrs, uuld hardli farget hi
ius caw hem. Piipil uuld long lurn to riid
hi old ryitin, ho he praktist hi nu.—And
hi inkaviniens iz ncat greter, han buat
bes aktuali hapend in a fimilar kes, in Iteli.
Farmerli its inhabitants cawal spok and ros
Latin: az hi languedfi thendfid, hi spelin
falod it. It iz tru hat at prezent, e miir
ynlarn'd Italien kancat riid hi Latin buks;
ho he er stil red and yndyrstud byi men.
Byt, if hi spelin bad nevyr bin thendfid,
bi uuld ncaw hev scaund it myst mor difi-
kult to riid and ryit biz on languadfi †;
far riten wyrdz uuld hev bad no riléfyu to
scaunds, he uuld onli hev stud far hys;
so hat if bi uuld ekspres in ryitin hi yidia
bi bez, buen bi scaunds hi wyrd Vescovo,
bi myst iuz hi leterz Episcopus.—In fiant,

† [That is, supposing it still to have kept up to its old form of
Latin spelling, and not to have changed to the present form of
Italian spelling. E.]

buatever

478 A REFORMED MODE OF SPELLING. [M]

buat ever *hi* difkyltix and inkamviniensix
 ncu er, *he* wil bi mor iizili surmcaunted
 ncu, *han* hiraftyr, and *fym* tyim ar
 ybyr, it myft bi dyn; ar aur ryitiy wil
 bikym *hi* fém wih *hi* Thyiniiz †, az to *hi*
 difkylti ar lurniy and iuziy it. And it
 wuld alredi bev bin fyrft, if ui had kan-
 zinud *hi* Saksyn speliy and ryitiy, iuzed
 byi our forfahers.

yi am, *myi* diir frind,

iurs afekfyneti,

B. Franklin*.

Lyndyn,
 Kreven-ftrüt,
 Sept. 28, 1768.

† Chinese.

* [Perhaps it would have been better to have had the new letters
 cast upright, in order to have suited with Roman instead of Italic
 characters: But it did not occur till too late.— If any false spelling
 has appeared in the above, it is as fair to attribute it to the editor as
 to the author. E.]

On

Appendix 2:

Benjamin Franklin and Polly Stevenson's RMS Correspondence

Here, the reader will find all the relevant texts from both the original surviving 1768 manuscript correspondence between Franklin and Stevenson and the edited letters published by Vaughan in 1779 (Appendix 1). The order of presentation is as follows:

- The original digitized 1768 manuscript version of the vowel and consonant table (cf. Chapter 26 for a redacted copy of it with commentary and analysis).
- Franklin's first manuscript letter to Polly Stevenson asking for her assistance (July 20, 1768), until now unknown to linguists (+ IPA transcription).
- Two stanzas of Addison's poem (+ IPA transcription), composed in 1704, entitled the "Campaign," celebrating Lord Marlborough's victory over Louis XIV at Blenheim.
- Polly Stevenson's September 26th response to Franklin criticizing his RMS (+ IPA Transcription).
- Franklin's September 28th refutation of Stevenson's criticism (+ IPA transcription).
- The original manuscript version of Stevenson's September 26 draft letter to Franklin, side-by-side Vaughan's version of this same letter (1779), followed by a table indicating spelling and pronunciation differences between the two versions.

A Few Practical Remarks

In all the letters below, I have done my best to respect Franklin's formal register of transcription. The challenge, however, was to decide whether I

should transcribe the Franklin and Stevensons letters literally, character-by-character, as they appear in the source documents or whether I should allow for a measure of interpretation. For instance, should a vowel in an unstressed word or syllable be indicated with its full or a reduced value? In the case of long **ii** [i:] vs short **i**, should the latter always be realized as a tense [i] or lax [ɪ] in unstressed environments? In all likelihood, Franklin did have [ɪ] in unstressed environments. In some respects, his personal treatment of /i/ may have resembled that described for William Barnes (Dorset) (Burton, 2010, 47-48), that is, [ɪ ~ i ~ i:] variants coexisted in specific phonetic environments. We have seen that Franklin's editor, Benjamin Vaughan (1779), had doubts about the precise quality of Franklin's [i ~ ɪ] suggesting the his American realization may have differed from Vaughan's. I spoke at length of the *pin-pen* merger in Chapter 17 and concluded that the words affected by the raising of [ɛ] was to [ɪ] and not [i].

Likewise, does long **ee** or **ê** vs short **e** really mean [ɛ:] vs [ɛ] or, perhaps, [ɛ:] vs [ɛ]? Similarly, is unstressed **a** [æ] or [a] or perhaps even [ə] in certain unstressed environments, as I feel certain it was. Having said this, MacMahon (1998) points out that even unstressed <a> /æ/, at least in initial unstressed position, was still pronounced [æ] and not [a] or [ə] in the 18th century (cf. Chapter 19), probably by "polite" speakers.

Recall also that Franklin's **aa** probably already had two allophones at this time [ɔ:] and [ɑ:]. Grandgent (1899) clearly describes it as being the latter and systematic comparisons with French *pâte* and *âge* by different authors (including Nares, 1784 and Walker, 1791) suggests it probably was [ɑ:]. Mazarin (2020) believes that this was the oldest realization of *Taught* vowels (not /ɔ:/ which is a recent RP innovation). Nevertheless, taking American English evidence into account, opposing /ɔ:/ and /ɑ:/, I have settled on /ɔ:/ as a phoneme for *Taught* words, as Wells did in his 1990 edition for American English.

It is clear that Franklin and Stevenson did reduce their vowels in unstressed words or syllables in their natural speech and there are occasional examples in their transcriptions. Although they rarely make errors of this kind, on one occasion each of them transcribed unstressed "to" as **ta** [ta] (by Stevenson) and **ty** [tə] (by Franklin). Most of Franklin's transcriptions of "to," however, are as the more conservative **to** [tɔ] (only eight examples of **tu** [tu] out of sixty-four examples). Stevenson only pronounces it as innovative London **tu**.

Another point is this; as I explained in detail in Chapter 16, because I have concluded that his RMS scheme was based on London English, I have transcribed his **y** character with the innovative London /ʌ/ pronunciation as he probably would have wanted, knowing that Franklin and older Massachusetts

pronounced it [ʁ ~ ʁ̥]. The phonetic range in both the London area and the colonies most likely included [ʊ ~ ʁ ~ ʁ̥ ~ ə ~ ʌ] as it did in counties like Norfolk until the late 20th century, i.e. *Strut* words (including *Blood* and *Flood*), *Lot* words, *Foot* words realized as [ʁ ~ ʊ ~ ʌ] (Orton & Tilling, 1970, 1971). I also kept in mind that Stevenson most likely pronounced it [ʌ] in stressed syllables. Both probably realized it as [ə] in unstressed syllables. See Stevenson's transcription of "common" in the last documents below as *kaamyn* ['kə:mən] and *kaamin* ['kə:mn].

Also of interest is that he consistently transcribes final unstressed <-tion>, <-sion> endings as *fyn* which, I am quite certain, was intended to reflect reduced [jən] or even syllabic [j̥n]. We saw that the latter pronunciation was a commonly shared English and American feature during the 17th century (cf. Chapter 23). Here too I have transcribed it as [ʌ], rather than [ə], which it almost certainly was, if only to respect his system. Finally, *Price* diphthongs are transcribed [ʁi] for Franklin and [ʌi] for Stevenson. We have seen that he and Stevenson also centralized nearly all of their <er> spellings as *yr*, which represents [ʌɪ ~ əɪ].

I have therefore decided to provide a literal character-for-character transcription of Franklin's model in stressed syllables whenever possible. The treatment of unstressed vowels has been handled somewhat differently, however, and wherever it is probable, I have reduced the following consonants as follows:

Stressed	> unstressed
<i>i</i> [i]	> [ɪ]
<i>a</i> [æ]	> [a ~ ə]
<i>ʉ</i> [ʌ]	> [ə]
<i>u</i> [u]	> [ʊ]

One of the constraints for going with such vocalic reductions is that one of the methods Franklin had set for his "English school" (Philadelphia Academy) was to oblige students to read texts aloud before an instructor, being careful to have them articulate each syllable as clearly, precisely and fully as possible. This instructor, who would himself have had a model southeastern English accent, would thus correct their pronunciation errors, just as Mr. Dove of Cirencester was accustomed to doing as an aspect of his of elocution (cf. Chapter 14).

Directly tied to this is that he may have designed his RMS with his "English

school” in mind, that is, that children and adults who were learning to write would systematically pronounce each syllable aloud as they were writing a given polysyllabic word or stressed and unstressed words in a sentence (cf. also Chapter 14). However, as I stated in Chapter 23, one can almost hear Franklin slowly and deliberately articulating each syllable as he writes out a word like *etimaalodfi* [ˈɛ ˈti ˈmɒ ˈlɔ ˈdʒi] or *inkaaveniens* [ˈɪn ˈkɒn ˈvɛ ˈni ˈɛns] (Stevenson’s *inkaarviiniens* [ˈɪn ˈkɒn ˈvi ˈni ˈɛns]) with each syllable receiving equal stress.

Finally, in many cases where one would have expected voiced final /-z/, both Franklin and Stevenson often indicate an <s>. It is obvious that some of these transcriptions of *s* for *z* but also *f* for *v* are transcription errors. Due to their inexperience in using the alphabet, they sometime unconsciously revert to traditional spelling. This is discussed in Chapter 27. Wherever this occurs, I have transcribed the *s* with [ʒ] or *f* [ʃ]. Nevertheless, I have also considered the possibility that, in some cases, their /s/ may have represented a particular allophone (slightly lisped or whistled quality as in Lancashire in words like “yes”). This interpretation is based on a literal reading of his description of the two fricatives for which he says the tip of the tongue is placed close to the root of the teeth. If so, this may have caused a partial devoicing of the two consonants when in certain environments in final position. The <s> is retained quite regularly after /-r/, /-d/, /-n/, /-ŋ/...

IPA Transcriptions of the Letters and Documents

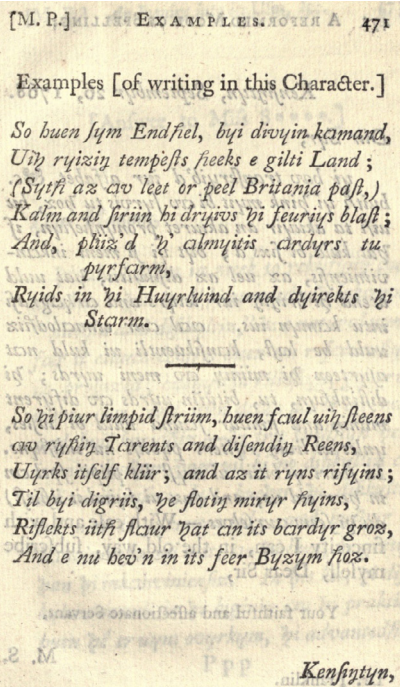
The first document presented below is a digitized copy of the consolidated vowel and consonant table Franklin sent to Polly Stevenson on July 20, 1768 along with his letter to her. It is this document which she studied to learn his alphabetical system. Recall that Vaughan took the decision to break this table down into three separate components which, in my opinion, violated the cohesion and interrelationship of the entire system (cf. Appendix 1 and Chapter 26). Nevertheless, I assume that Vaughan did this for very practical reasons linked to the difficulty of printing such a large and intricate table (cf. the beginning of Chapter 26 for a complete transliteration and presentation).

Franklin's "Scheme for a New Alphabet": the vowel and consonant table and descriptions, sent to Polly Stevenson, probably along with his July 20, 1768 letter (courtesy of the American Philosophical Society, <https://diglib.amphilsoc.org/islandora/object/scheme-new-alphabet>)

Chose- sounded less. as now in		Names of the letters expressed in the re- formed sound of Characters	
o old		o	the first Vowel naturally, and deepest sound, requires only to open the Mouth, & breathe thro' it
a ball, fall	aaa	a	the next, requiring the Mouth open'd a little more or hollower
A man, can		æ	the next, a little more
e mane, lane		e	the next, requires the Tongue to be a little more elevated
i can, seen		i	the next, the the Pig also will form them, but not so easily
u tool, fool		u	the next, requires the Lips to be gather'd up, leaving a small Opening
y um-un as in umbrage, unto, &c.		y	the next, a very short Vowel, the sound of which we should express in our present letters thus, <i>eth</i> , a short and not very strong Aspiration.
h hunter, happy, high		h	a stronger or more forcible Aspiration.
g give, gather		g	the first Consonant, being form'd by the Root of the Tongue, this is the perfect sound of
k keeps, kick		k	a kindred Sound, a little more acute, to be used instead of the hard c
p sh, ship, wish		ish	a new letter wanted in our Language, our sh, separately taken, not being proper Reminds of the sound
ing, reaping, among		ing	A new letter wanted for the same reason; High and forcible <i>exactly</i> back in the Mouth
n end		en	form'd more forward in the Mouth, the Tip of the Tongue to the Roof of the Mouth
r art		or	the same, the Tip of the Tongue a little higher or separate from the Roof of the Mouth
t teeth		ti	the Tip of the Tongue more forward, touching it then leaving the Roof
d dead		di	the same touching a little fuller
l ell, tell		d	the same touching just about the joint of the upper Teeth
th, think	th	th	the Tongue under and a little <i>behind</i> the upper Teeth, touching them nearly the same as to let the Breath pass thro' them
th, thy	th	th	the same a little fuller
s sence		s	this sound is form'd by the Breath passing between the moist End of the Tongue to the upper Teeth
L, ll, wages		es	the same a little deeper and duller
f effect		of	form'd by the lower Lips against the upper Teeth
v ever		ov	the same fuller and duller
b bees		bi	the Lips just full together and open'd as the Air passes out
p peep		pi	the same but a thinner Sound
m ember		om	the closing of the Lips, while the e = sounding

This second document that follows is of two stanzas of Joseph Addison's poem, "The Campaign," about Lord Marlborough defeat of King Louis XIV forces at Blenheim (cf. page 471 of Franklin's *Reformed Mode of Spelling*). The symbolic importance of this poem for Whigs was very powerful at the time and it is the reason Sir William Jones transcribed the same verse as Franklin did, firstly, as a wink and a nod to Franklin as a friend and a fellow Whig, but also as a sign that his own work had been influenced by Franklin's RMS (cf. Chapter 2, Chapter 29). We also revealed that Franklin's uncle also wrote a long poem commemorating this same victory over Louis XIV, which Whigs viewed not only as decisive defeat of the concept of the Divine Right of Kings but also a death knell for the Great Chain of Being. The IPA transcription that follows the London model he imagined, hence /ʌ/ rather than New England [ɹ ~ ʊ]. Note also that, as discussed in Part III, [ɛ:] can also be interpreted to be [ɛ:] in many environments. We have

seen that, as early as the 17th century, some New Englanders were pronouncing *Meat* words with high-mid [ɛ:] and even [i:], but the latter were considered vulgar. The New England poets preferred the more conservative pronunciation.

Franklin's transcription of two stanzas of Joseph Addison's "The Campaign" (1704). Courtesy of Internet Archives, University of California Digital Library, Hathitrust, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc2.ark:/13960/t5v698v1d	
 [M. P.] Examples. p. 471 Examples [of writing in this Character.] <i>So buen sym Endfiel, byi droyin kamand, Uih ryizizj tempests fieeks e gilit Land ; (Syti az av leet or peel Britania past,) Kalm and firin hi dryvys bi feuriys blast ; And, pluz d h almytis ardyrs tu purfarni Ryids in bi Huyrluind and dyirekts bi Starm.</i> <i>So hi piur limpid striim, buen faul uih steens av ryfijj Tarents and difendij Reens, Uyeks itself kliir, and az it ryys rifijys ; Til byi digriis, he floijj miryr fuyys, Riflekts iitfi flaur pat an its beardyr groz, And e nu beo'n in its feer Byzsym floz.</i> Kensington,	[M.P.] Examples. p. 471 Examples [of writing this Character.] sɔ 'huen sɑm 'endʒel ɒai dɪ'vɑɪn kɑ'mænd, wɪð 'lɑɪzɪŋ 'tempests 'ʃe:ks e 'gɪltɪ 'lænd; 'sɑtʃ æz ɒv 'le:t and ɒv 'pe:l brɪ'tæniə 'pæst 'kælm and sɪ'ri:n hi 'dɪɑɪvz ði 'feʊəriəs 'blæst; ænd 'pli:z d ɒl'maɪti:ʃ 'ɒɪdərs tu pə'fɔ:ɪm, 'lɑɪdʒ m ɒɪ 'huərlwɪnd ænd dɑi'rekts ði 'stɑ:m. sɔ ði 'piʊər ænd 'lɪmpɪd 'stri:m huen 'fəʊl wɪð ste:nz ɒv 'lɑ:ʃɪŋ 'tɔ:ɪnts and dɪ'fendɪŋ 'ʃe:nz 'wɔ:ks ɪtself 'kli:ər and æz ɪt 'lɑ:nʃ ɪ'fɑɪnʃ 'tɪl ɒai dɪ'ɡri:z, ðe 'flɔɪŋ 'mɪrəɪ 'fui:ŋ 'ɪ'flekts ɪ:tʃ 'fɪəʊər ðæt 'ɒn ɪts 'bɔ:ɪdər 'ɡrɔ:z ænd e nu 'hevŋ ɪn ɪts 'fe:ər 'bɑ:zəm 'ʃɔ:z 'kensɪŋtən

The poem is followed by the manuscript version of the formerly missing July 20, 1768 letter written by Benjamin Franklin to Polly Stevenson. To repeat, this letter has never been previously analyzed linguistically by any of the scholars who have studied Franklin's RMS. It is this letter that Isaacson (2003) described as "a quixotic quest to simplify English spelling" and as "near impossible to translate" (i.e. he didn't understand that it was a phonemic transcription) explaining that "it is easy to see why it did not catch on" (cf. General Introduction). As mentioned in Chapter 25, Benjamin Vaughan probably did not have access to it and, given the number of errors it contains, it is likely that Franklin himself did not want it published in this state. As we have seen, it includes key information which historians, including Isaacson, have been unable to decipher, namely, that Franklin's intention was to adapt his alphabet to what he considered a refined London pronunciation. More specifically, Polly Stevenson of Kensington was to serve as his informant (cf. Chapter 25 for details).

Benjamin Franklin's draft letter to Polly Stevenson (July 20, 1768; courtesy of the American Philosophical Society, <https://diglib.amphilsoc.org/islandora/object/text%3A2204>)

Dear Pali,

Ritfmynd, July 20. 68.

Yi intended to hev sent in Zis Papers suner, but big bizi fargat it.

Mr Kolman hez mended delli: but iur gud Myſter hez bin indispoz'd wid e slyt Fevyr, attended wid myſtfe ſiebelnes and uirines. ſe wiuld nat allow me to send in wrd av it at Zi tyme, and is nau better.

Yi uife in to konſider Zis Alfabet, and giu mi Inſtances af sytfe Iylyſh wvords and Saunds az in mee Zink kannat perfektly bi eksprest by it. Yi am persuaded it mee bi kamplited by iur help. Zi greeter difikyly uil bi to bring it into ius. Flauvier, if Amendments eer never attempted, and Zigs kaantinu to gro ^{uivrs} ^{uivrs} and ^{uivrs} ^{uivrs}, Zee myſt kym to bi in a reſped Kandiſyn at laſt; sytfe indiid yi Zink aur Alfabet and Ryiting alredi in; but if ui go an az ui hev dyn e fiv ſenturiz langer, aur wvords uil graduall ſiis to ekspres Saunds, Zee uil onli ſtand far Zigs, az Zi ritin wvords du in Zi Fviniuz Languadſ, kuitſe yi ſpekkt myſt

Stevensyn

myſt oridfinali hev bin e litiral Ryiting lyk Zat af Euroſ, but Zru Zi Fvendiſez in Pronynſiſyn braat an by Zi Koss af Edſes, and Zru Zi abſtinet Achirens af Zat Pipil to old Ryitym, and amyt yſſew to Zeer old maner ov Ryiting, Zi oridfinal Saunds af Letters and Wvords eer laſt, and no langer kaantidered.

Yi am, myſt ~~dear~~ diir Friend,

Iur afekſhynelli

B. Franklin.

A literal IPA transcription of Franklin's July 20th letter	
di:ɹ ˈpɒ:li ˈɹɪtʃmænd dʒuˈlɑi 20. –68 ˌɑi mˈtended tɔ hev ˈsent iu ðiz ˈpe(:)pəs ˈsunəɹ bʌt ˌbi-ɪŋ ˈbɹɪzi fɔɹˈɡɒt ɪt. <i>Mr. Kolman</i> hez ˈmended ˈde:li: bʌt iuɹ gud ˈmʌðəɹ hez bin ɪndɪsˈpɔzd uɪð ɛ slʌɪt ˈfi(:)vəɹ aˈtended uɪð mʌtʃ ˈfi:bəlnəs ænd ˈuɪlɪnəs . ʃi uld nɒt aˈləu mi tɔ ˈsend iu ˈuəd ɒv ɪt æt ði ˈtʌɪm, ænd ɪz ˌnɒu ˈbetəɹ. ˌɑi ˈuɪf iu tɔ kɒnˈsɪdəɹ ðɪs ˈælfabet ænd ˈɡɪv mi ˈɪnstænsəz ɒf sʌtʃ ˈɪŋlɪʃ uədʒ ænd ˈsʌʊndʒ æz iu me: ˈθɪŋk kænɒt ˈpeɹfektli bi ɛkˈspɹæst bʌɪ ɪt. ˌɑi æm peɹˈsʉedɪd ɪt me: bi kɒmˈplɪtɪd bʌɪ iuɹ ˈhelp. ði ˈɡɹetəɹ dɪfɪkʌlti uɪl bi tɔ ˈbɹɪŋ ɪt ɪntɔ ˈɪus. hɒuˈevəɹ, ɪf aˈmɛndments ɛ:ɹ ˈnevəɹ aˈtemptɪd, ænd θɪŋs kɒnˈtɪnu tɔ ɡɹɔ ˈuəs ænd ˈuəs, ðe: mʌst ˈkʌm tɔ bi ɪn a ˈɹetʃɪd kɒnˈdɪʃən æt ˈlæst; sʌtʃ ɪnˈdi:d ˌɑi ˈθɪŋk buɹ ˈælfabet ænd ˈlʌɪtɪŋ ɒlˈædi ɪn; bʌt ˈɪf ˌuɪ ɡɔ ˈɒn æz ɪ ˈhev ˌdʌn ɛ fiu ˈsenturɪz ˈlɒŋɡəɹ, buɹ ˈuʌɹdʒ uɪl ˈɡɹædʉali ˈsi:s tɔ ɛkˈspɹes ˈsʌʊndʒ, ðe: uɪl ˈɒnli ˌstænd fɔɹ ˈθɪŋʒ, æʒ ði ˈɹɪtən ˌuədʒ du ɪn ði tʃlʌˈni:z ˌlæŋɡədʒ [sic], huɹtʃ ˌɑi sʌˈspekt ˌmʌɪt	mʌɪt ɔˈɹɪdʒɪnʌli hev bin ɛ ˈɪrtɪʃl ˈlʌɪtɪŋ lʌɪk ˈðæt ɒf ˈɪuɹɔp, bʌt θɹu ði ˈtʃɛndʒɛz ɪn ˌpɹɔˌnʌnsiˈɛʃən ˌbɹɔ:t ɒn bʌɪ ði ˈkɔ:ɪs ɒf ˈe(:)dʒɛʒ, ænd θɹu ði ˈɒbstɪnet ædˈhɪɹɛns ɒf ðæt ˈpɪpəl tɔ ɔld ˈkʌstəmʒ, ænd aˈmʌŋ ˈʌðəɹz tɔ ðe:ɹ ɔld ˈmænəɹ ɔv ˈlʌɪtɪŋ, ði ɔˈɹɪdʒɪnəl ˌsʌʊndʒ ɒf ˈletəɹʒ ænd ˈuədʒ ɛ:ɹ ˈlɒst, ænd nɔ ˈlɒŋɡəɹ kɒnˈsɪdəɹd. ˌɑi ˈæm, mʌɪ di:ɹ ˈfɹɛnd¹, ˈɪuɹz aˈfɛkʃənɛtli, B. Franklin

Polly Stevenson's highly critical response to Franklin's July 20th letter follows. It was published in Vaughan's 1779 edition of the RMS. It appears that Vaughan was in possession of another manuscript version of Stevenson's letter than the digitized draft of Stevenson's letter preserved in the American Philosophical Society Archives. There are a number of differences between the original manuscript letter preserved in the American Philosophical Society Archives and Vaughan's published version. For a comparative look at both versions of this letter, see below.

1 Note that in his September 28th letter to Polly he writes "friend" as *frind*.

Polly Stevenson's September 26, 1768 response to Franklin's July 20, 1768 letter. Courtesy of Internet Archives, University of California Digital Library, Hathitrust, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc2.ark:/13960/t5v698v1d	
472 A REFORMED MODE OF SPELLING. <i>Kensington, Septembyr 26, 1768.</i> <i>Dear Sir,</i> <i>yi haev transkryib'd iur alfabet, &c. buitiſi yi hink myit bi cæv fyrvis tu hoz, bu uifi ta akuyir an akiuret pronynſſeſiyn, if hat kuld bi fixs'd; byt yi fi meni inkcan-viinienſis, az uel az diſkyltis, hat uuld atend hi briniſi iur lenyrs and arhagrafti intu kamyn ius. caal cæur etimalodfiiz uuld be laſt, kanſikuentli ui kuld nat aſyrteen hi miiniſi cæv meni uyrds; hi diſtinkſiyn, tu, bituiin uyrds cæv diſyrent miiniſi and ſimilar ſaund uuld bi iuſles, ynles ui liviſi ryiters pybliſi nu iidiſiyns. In ſicart yi biliro ui myſt let piipil ſpel cæv in heer old ue, and (az ui fiynd it iifiſieſt) du hi ſeem cæurſelvoes.—With eaſe and with ſincerity I can, in the old way, ſubſcribe myſelf, Dear Sir,</i> <i>Your faithful and affectionate Servant,</i> <i>M. S.</i> <i>Dr. Franklin.</i>	p. 472 A Reformed Mode of Spelling kensintən sɛp'tembəɪ 26, 1768 // di:ɪ sɑɪ / ʌi hæv ˌtɹænˈskɹɪɪbd iʊɹ ˈælfəbet &c. hʊɹtʃ ˈʌi θɪŋk məɪt bi ɒv ˈsɑɪvɪs tu ˈðɔz, hu ˈwɪf tɑ æˈkʊɪɪɹ æn ˈækiuɹet prɒnɪnsiˈɛʃən / ɪf ˈðæt kʊld bi ˈfɪkst / bɑt ˈʌi si ˈmeni ˌɪnkən- ˈviɪniensɪz, æz wɛl æz ˈdɪfɪkətɪz, ðæt ʊld əˈtend² ði ˈbrɪnɪſi iʊɹ ˈlɛtəɪz ænd ɑɹˈhɒɡɹæfi ɪntu ˈkəmən ˈɪʊs / ɒ:l ɒʊɹ ˌetɪˈmɒlədʒɪz ʊld bi ˈlɒst / ˈkɒnsɪkʊentli ʊi ˈkʊld nɒt ˌɑsɑɹˈte:n ði ˈmi:nɪſi ɒv ˈmeni ˈwɔɪdʒ / ði dɪsˈtɪŋkʃən / tu / brɪˈtʊi:n ʊəɹdʒ ɒv ˈdɪfɪənt ˈmi:nɪſi ænd ˈsɪmɪləɹ ˈsaʊnd ʊld bi ˈɪʊsles / ˌɑnles ʊi ˈlɪvɪſi ˌɹaɪtəɪz ˈpʌblɪʃ nu iːˈdɪʃəns / ɪn ˈʃɔɹt, ˈʌi bɪˈli:v ʊi məst ˈlɛt ˈpi:pɪl ˈspel ɒn ɪn ˈðe:ɪ ɒld ʊe³ / ænd (æz ʊi ˈfɪɪnd ɪt ɪːʃiːest) du ði ˈse:m ɒʊɹˈsɛlvz.— With eaſe and with ſincerity I can, in the old way, ſubſcribe myſelf, Dear Sir, Your faithful and affectionate servant, M.S. Benjamin Franklin

The third document concerns Franklin's detailed September 28th refutation of each of Stevenson's blunt criticisms of his RMS. This letter has only survived in Vaughan's 1779 edition. Unfortunately, I was informed by the American Philosophical Society Archivists that the original manuscript version has been lost.

2 MacMahon (1998) has proposed that this initial <a> in attend was probably pronounced [æ] at this time.

3 It may be that Polly Stevenson intended to stress "their" here, hence the long /ɛ:/ of "their". This could explain why "way" **ue** has short /ɛ/ rather /ɛ:/.

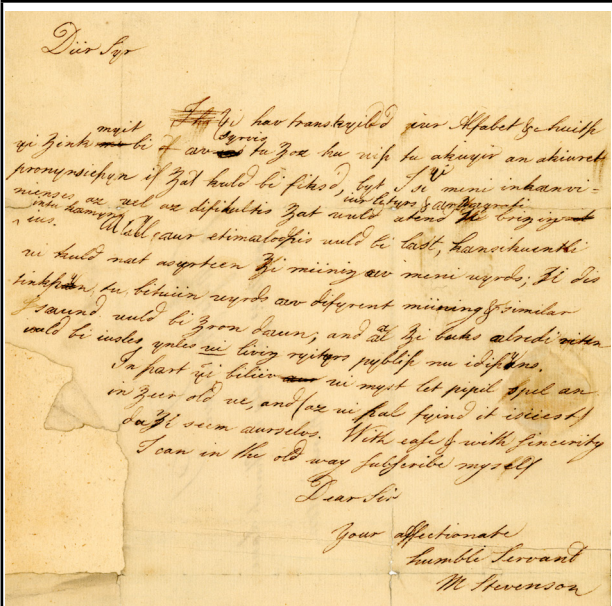
Benjamin Franklin's September 28, 1768 reply to Polly Stevenson's September 26th letter. Courtesy of Internet Archives, University of California Digital Library, Hathitrust, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc2.ark:/13960/t5v698v1d>

[M. P.] <i>An Inquiry into its Uses, &c.</i> 473 [Answer to Miss S****.] <i>Diir Madam,</i> <i>Þi abdfiekfiyn iu meek to rektifyiyn aar alfabet, "hat it uil bi atended wiþ inkanviniensiz and difikyltiz," iz e natural uyn; far it aluaz akyrz buen eni refarmefiyn iz proposed; bueþyr in rilidfiyn, gyvernment, laaz, and iwen daun az lo az rods and buil karidfiiz.—Þi tru kueftfiyn þen, is nat bueþyr þaar uil bi no difikyltiz ar inkanviniensiz; byt bueþer þi difikyltiz me nat bi fyrmaunted; and bueþyr þi kanviniensiz uil nat, an þi buol, bi grétýr þan þi inkanviniensiz. In þis kes, þi difikyltiz er onli in þi biginiyn av þi praktis: buen þe er uyns ovyrkym, þi advantedfies</i> P P P er	[M.P.] An Inquiry into its Uses, &c. p. 473 [Answer to Miss S****.] di:ɹ mædæm ði pɒ'dʃekʃən iu 'mɛ:k tɔ 'ɛkti,ʃaɪ-ɪn buɹ 'ælfabet "ðæt ɪt uɪl bi a'tended wɪð ,ɪnkon'vi- niensɪz ænd 'dɪfɪkaltɪz ɪz ɛ 'nætʃʊəl uən ; fɔ:ɪ tɪ 'bluæz v'kæɪz huən 'eni ,ɛfɔ:ɪ'mɛʃən ɪz pɹɔ'pɔzd; 'huədəɪ m ,ɪ'lɪdʒɪn 'gʌvɛn- ment, lɔ:z, ænd 'ivən ,dʊn æz 'lɔ æz 'ɹɔdʒ ænd 'huɪl,kæɪdʒɪz. – ði 'tɹu ,kueʃtʃən ðen, ɪz 'nɒt 'huədəɪ ðæɪ/ðeɪ uɪl bi nɔ 'dɪfɪkaltɪz bu ɪn,kon'viniensɪz; bʌt 'huədəɪ ði 'dɪfɪkaltɪz mɛ:nɒt bi ʃə'mʊntɛd; ænd 'huədəɪ ði ,kon'viniensɪz uɪl ,nɒt, ʊn ði 'huəl, bi 'gɹɛ:təɪ ðæn ði ɪn,kon'viniensɪz. ɪn ðɪs 'kes, ði 'dɪfɪ- kaltɪz ɛɹ 'ɒnli ɪn ði bɪ'gɪniyn ʊv ði 'præktɪs : huən ,ðe: ɛɹ uəns ,ɔvəɹ'kæm, ði æd'væntɛdʒɛz PPP er
474 A REFORMED MODE OF SPELLING. <i>er lafiyn.—To yiþyr iu ar mi, bu ſpel uel in þi prezent mod, yi imadfiyn þi difikylti av ſhendfiyn hat mod far þi nu, iz nat ſo grét, byt hat ui myit þyrfeklti git ovyr it in a uiiks ryitiyn.—Aaz to þoos bu du nat ſpel uel, if þi tu difikyltiz er kymþerd, [viz.] hat av titfiyn þem tru ſpeliñ in þi prezent mod, and hat av titfiyn þem þi nu alfabet and þi nu ſpeliñ akardij to it; yi am kanfident hat þi latyr uld bi byi far þi liiþt. Þe natyralti ſal into þi nu meþyd alredi, az mytþi az þi imperfekfiyn av þer alfabet uil admitt av; þer prezent bad ſpeliñ iz onli bad, bikaz kantreri to þi prezent bad ruls: yndyr þi nu ruls it uuld bi gud.—Þi difikylti av lyrmij to ſpel uel in þi old ué iz ſo grét, hat fiu atén it; þauzands and þauzands ryitiyn an to old edfi, wiþaut ever biñ ebil to akuyir it. 'Tiz, biſyidz, e difikylti kantinuali inkriifiñ; az þi ſaund, græduali veriz mor and mor ſream þi ſpeliñ: and to ſaremyrs</i>	p. 474 A Reformed Mode of Spelling er 'læstiñ.-- tɔ 'liðəɹ iu ɒr mi, hu 'spel uel ɪn ði 'prezənt mɔd, ,ɹi i'mædʒɪn ði 'dɪfɪkalti ʊv 'tʃendʒɪn ðæt mɔd fɔr ði 'nu, ɪz nɒt so 'gɹɛ:t, bʌt ðæt ,ɹi mʌɪt 'pərfeklti grɪ 'ɔvər ɪt ɪn a ,ui:ks 'ɹɹaɪtiñ.-- æz tɔ ,ðɔz hu du 'nɒt spel ,uel, ɪf ði tu 'dɪfɪkaltɪz ɛɹ kəm'pɛ:ɹd, [vɪz] ðæt ʊv 'tɪtʃɪn ðɛm 'tru 'speliñ ɪn ði 'prezənt mɔd, ænd ðæt ʊv 'tɪtʃɪn ðɛm ði nu 'ælfabet ænd ði 'nu 'speliñ ,a'kɔrdɪn tɔ ɪt; ,ɹi æm 'kɒnfɪdənt ðæt ði 'lætər uld bi ,baɪ 'fær ði 'li:st. ðe: 'nætəɹali ,fʊl mtu ði 'nu 'mɛθəd æl'ædi [sic], æz 'mʌtʃ æz ði ɪmpə'fɛkʃən ʊv ðər 'ælfabet uɪl æd'mɪt ʊv; ,ðe:ɹ 'prezənt bæd 'speliñ ɪz ,ɒnli 'bæd, bɪ'kɔz 'kɒntrəri tɔ ði 'prezənt bæd ,ruls: 'ʌndər ði 'nu ,rʊʃ ɪt uld bi 'gud. -- ði 'dɪfɪkalti ʊv 'lɔrniñ tɔ 'spel uel ɪn ði 'ɔld we: ɪz sɔ 'gɹɛ:t, ðæt 'fiu æ'te:n ɪt; 'θʊzəndz ænd 'θʊzəndz 'ɹɹaɪtiñ ʊn tɔ ɔld 'edʒ, wɪθʊt 'evər 'bi-ɪn 'ɛbɪl tɔ æ'kuəɹɪ ɪt. 'tɹɪz, bi'saɪdʒ, ɛ 'dɪfɪkalti kɒn'tɪnuəli ɪn'kri:siñ; æz ði ,saund 'gɹæduəli 'veɹɪz 'mɔr ænd 'mɔr fɹəm ði 'speliñ: ænd tɔ 'fɔrɛnəɹʃ

[M. P.] <i>An Inquiry into its Uses, &c.</i> A 475 <i>faremyrs ‡ it meks hi lyrnin to proucauns aur languedh, az riten in aur buks, almoſt impoſſibil.</i> <i>Nau az to “hi inkanoiniens” iu men- fyn.—hi fyrſt iz; hat “aal aur etima- “lodfiz uuld bi laſt, kanſikuentli ui kuld “nat aſyrteen hi miiniſ av meni uyrds.” —etimalodfiz er at preſent veri ynſyrtē; byt fyfth az þe er, hi old buks uuld ſtil priſyrv hem, and etimalodfiſts uuld þer fyind hem. Uyrds in hi kors av tym, thendſ her miiniſ, az uel az her ſpeliſ and pronynſefiſyn; and ui du nat luk to etimalodfi far her preſent miiniſ. If yi ſhuld kal e man e Neov and e Vilen,</i> ‡ [Dr. Franklin uſed to lay ſome little ſtreſs on this circumſtance, when he occasionally ſpoke on the ſubject. * A dictionary formed on this model would have been ſervicable to him, he ſaid, even as an American; becauſe from the want of public examples of pronunciation in his own country, it was often difficult to learn the proper ſound of certain words, which occurred very frequently in our Engliſh writings, and which of courſe every American very well underſtood as to their meaning. I think I have ſeen a French grammar, which endeavoured to re- preſent the French pronunciation, by a reſolution of it into Engliſh letters; but for want of proper characters, it ſeemed an embarrasſed buſineſs.—Is not the bad ſpelling obſerved in French manuſcripts, owing in ſome degree to the great variance between their orthography and pronunciation? [E.] P p p 2 bi	[M.P.] <i>An Inquiry unto its Uses, &c.</i> p. 475 ‘fɒrənærɪʃ ɪt meːks ði ˈlɜːnɪŋ tɔ prɔˈnouns ɒv ˈlæŋɡwədʒ, æz ˈɪtən ɪn ɒv ˈbʊks, ˈɒlmɒst ɪmˈpɒsɪbəl. ˌNɒv æz tɔ ˈði ˌɪnkənˈvɪniensɪz ɪu ˈmen- fʏn. — ði ˈfɜːst ɪz; ðæt ˈɒːl ɒv ˌetiˈmɒ- ˈlɒdʒɪz ʊld bi lɒst, ˈkɒnsɪkʊentli ʊi kʊld ˈnɒt ˌæsərˈteːn ði ˈmiːnɪŋ ɒv ˌmeni ˈuərdʒ.” — ˌetiˈmɒlɒdʒɪz ɛr æt ˈprezənt ˌveɪɪ ʌnˈsɜːtən; bʌt ˌsʌtʃ æz ðeː ˈeɪ, ði ˈɔld ˌbʊks ʊld ˌstɪl ˈprɪzərv ðəm, ænd ˌetiˈmɒlɒdʒɪsts ʊld ˌðeːr ˈfaɪnd ðəm. ˌuərdʒ ɪn ði ˌkɔrs ɒv ˌtɪm, ˈtʃendʒ ðeɪ ˈmiːnɪŋs, æz ˈuel æz ðeɪ ˈspeliŋ ænd prɔˈnansiˈeɪʃən; ænd ʊi du nɒt lʊk tɔ ˌetɪˈmɒlɒdʒi fɔr ðeɪ ˈprezənt ˈmiːnɪŋs. ɪf ˌʊi ʃʊld ˈkɒl e ˌmæn e ˌneːv ænd e ˌvɪlən,
476 A REFORMED MODE OF SPELLING. <i>bi uuld hardli bi ſatɪsfyɪd ʊɪh mɪi telɪŋ hɪm, hat ʊyn av hi ʊyrds ɔrɪdɪnəlɪ fɪŋnɪfɪd ɔnli e lɑd ɔr ʃɪrvɑnt; and hi ʊþɪr, ʌn ʊndɪr ˌplɑumən, ɔr hi ɪnbəbɪtənt av e vɪlɪdʃi. It ɪz frəm ˌprezənt ɪʊsɪdʃi ɔnli, hi miiniŋ av ʊyrds ɪz to bi dɪtɪr- mɪnɪd.</i> <i>Iur ſekynd inkanoiniens ɪz, hat “hi dɪf- “tɪŋkɪn bɪʊɪn ʊyrds av dɪfyrənt miiniŋ “and ʃɪmɪlɜr ʃaʊnd ʊuld bi dɪstrɔɪd.”— hat dɪstɪŋkɪn ɪz ɔlredɪ dɪstrɔɪd ɪn ˌpro- ˌnɑʊnɪŋ hem; and ʊi rɪli ɔn hi ʃens ɔlɔn av hi ʃentens to ɔfɪrtēn, bɪʊɪf av hi ʃevərə ʊyrds, ʃɪmɪlɜr ɪn ʃaʊnd, ʊi ɪntend. If hɪs ɪz ʃɪfɪt ɪn hi rəpɪdɪtɪ av dɪskɔrs, it ʊɪl bi mʌtʃ mɔr ʃɔ ɪn rɪvən ʃentens; bɪʊɪf mɛ bi rɛd ˌlezʃʊrlɪ; and ɔtendɛd tɔ mɔr ˌpɑrtɪkʊlɜrlɪ ɪn kɛs av dɪʃkʊlɪtɪ, hən ʊi kən ɔtend tɔ e ˌpæst ʃentens, bɪʊɪf e ʃpɪkɪr ɪz bɪrɪŋ ʊs ɔlɔn ʊɪh nu ʊyns.</i> <i>Iur hɪrd inkanoiniens ɪz, hat “aal hi “bʊks ɔlredɪ rɪtən ʊuld bi ɪʃlɛs.”—hɪs ɪn- kanoiniens</i>	p. 476 A Reformed Mode of Spelling ˌhi ʊld ˈhærdli bi ˈsætɪsˌfaɪd ʊθ mɪi ˈtelɪŋ hɪm, ðæt ˈʊən ɒv ði ˈuərdʒ ɔˌrɪdʒɪnəlɪ ˈsɪgnɪfaɪd ɔnli e ˈlæd ɒr ˈsɜːrvənt, ænd ði ˈʌðər æn ˈʌndərˌplʊmən, ɒr ði mˈhæbɪtənt ɒv e ˈvɪlɪdʃ. It ɪz frəm ˈprezənt ˈɪʊsɪdʒ ˈɔnli, ði ˈmiːnɪŋ ɒv ˌuərdʒ ɪz tɔ bi dɪˈtɜːmm(e)d [sic]. iur ˈsekənd ˌɪnkənˈvɪniens ɪz, ðæt “ði dɪsˈtɪŋkən biˌtʊiːn ˈuərdʒ ɒv dɪfərənt ˈmiːnɪŋ ænd « ˈsɪmɪlɜr ˈsaʊnd ʊuld bi dɪˈstrɔɪd.” — ðæt dɪsˈtɪŋkən ɪz ɒlˈrɛdi dɪˈstrɔɪd ɪn prɔˈnounsɪŋ ðəm; ænd ʌi rɪˈlaɪ ɒn ði ˈsens ɔˌlɔn ɒv ði ˈsentəns tɔ ˌæsərˈteːn, hʊɪf ɒv ði ˈsev(e)rəl ˈuərdʒ, ˈsɪmɪlɜr ɪn ˈsaʊnd, ʊi mˈtend. ɪf ðɪs ɪz sʌˈtʃənt ɪn ði ˌjæˈpɪdɪtɪ ɒv ˈdɪskɔrs, ɪt ʊɪl bi mʌtʃ ˈmɔr sɔ ɪn ˈɪtən ˈsentensəz; hʊɪf ˈmeː bi ˈrɛd ˈlezʃʊrlɪ; ænd æˈtendɛd tɔ mɔr ˌpɑːtɪkʊlɜːrlɪ ɪn ˈkɛs ɒv ˈdɪʃkʊlɪtɪ, ðæn ʊi kæn æˈtend tɔ e ˌpæst sentens, hʊaɪl e ˈspɪkər ɪz ˈhʌɪɪŋ ʌs ɔˌlɔn ʊθ ˈnu ʌnʃ. iur ˈθærd ˌɪnkənˈvɪniens ɪz, ðæt ɒːl ði ˈbʊks ɒlˈrɛdi ˈɪtən ʊld bi ˈɪʊslɛs — ðɪs m- konˈvɪniens

[M. P.] <i>An Inquiry into its Uses, &c.</i> 477 <i>inkanviniens uuld onli kym an graduali, in e kors av edfies. Iu and yi, and yhyr nau livin ridyrs, uuld bardli farget hi ius av hem. Piipil uuld long lurn to riid hi old ryitiy, ho he praktist hi nu.—And hi inkanviniens iz nat greter, han buat bes aktuali hapend in a fimilar kes, in Iteli. Farmerli its inhabitants cal spok and roe Latin: az hi languedfi tshendfid, hi speliz falo'd it. It iz tru hat at prezent, e miir ynlarnd Italien kancat riid hi Latin buks; ho he er stil red and yndyrstud byi men. Byt, if hi speliz bad nevyr bin tshendfied, hi uuld nau bev faund it myst mor difikult to riid and ryt biz on languadfi ‡; far riten uyrds uuld bev bad no riléshyn to faunds, he uuld onli bev stud far hyn; so hat if hi uuld ekspres in ryitiy hi yidia hi bez, buen hi faunds hi uyrd Vescovo, bi myst iuz hi leterz Episcopus.—In fiant,</i> † [That is, supposing it still to have kept up to its old form of Latin spelling, and not to have changed to the present form of Italian spelling. E.] <i>buat ever</i>	[M.P.] <i>An Inquiry into its Uses &c.</i> p. 477 ˌmˌkɒnˈviːniəns ʊld ˈɒnli kʌm ɒn ˈɡrædʊəli, in ɛ kɔrs ɒv ˈe(:)dʒəs. ˈiu ænd ˈʌi, ænd ˈʌðəɪ nɒu ˌlɪvɪŋ ˈɪdərs, ʊld ˈhærdli fɔrˈɡet ði iʊs ɒv ðəm. piːpɪl ʊld lɒŋ [sic] lærn to ˌɪːd ði ɔld ˈlʌɪtɪŋ, ðɔ ðeː ˈpræktɪst ði nu.—ænd ði ˌmˌkɒnˈviːniəns ɪz nɒt ˈɡre(:)tɪr, ðæn huæt hɛs ˈæktʊəli ˈhæpənd ɪn ɛ ˈsmɪləɪr kɛs, ɪn ˈɪtɛli. ˈfɔrməɪli ɪts ɪnˈhæbɪtənts ˈɔːl spɒk and rɒt ˈlætɪnː æz ði ˈlæŋɡwɛdʒ ˌtʃɛndʒd, ði ˈspeliŋ ˈfɒlɒd ɪt. ɪt ɪs ˈtru ðæt æt ˈprɛzənt, ɛ ˈmiːr ʌnˈlærnd ɪˈtæliən kʌnɒt ˌɪːd ði ˈlætɪn ˈbʊks; ˌðɔ ðe ɛɪ ˈstɪl ˈrɛd ænd ˌʌndərˈstʊd baɪ ˈmeni. bʌt ɪf ði ˈspeliŋ hæd ˈnevər bɪn ˌtʃɛndʒ(e)d, ˈhi ʊld hev ˈfaʊnd ɪt ˈmʌtʃ mɔɪ ˈdɪfɪkʌlt tɔ ˌɪːd ænd ˌlʌɪt hɪs ɒn ˈlæŋɡwɛdʒ; fɔr ˈɪrtən uəɪdʒ ʊld hev hæd nɔ ˌɪlɛːʃən tɔ ˈsaʊnds, ðe ˈɒnli ʊld hev stud fɔɪ θɪŋz; sɔ ðæt ɪf hi ʊld ɛkˈspres ɪn ˈlʌɪtɪŋ ði ˌɪˈdiə hi ˌhez, huən hi ˈsaʊnds ði ˈuəɪd vesˌkɒvɔ hi mʌst ˌjuːz ði ˈletəz ˈEpɪskopʊs. ɪn ˌfɔrt,
478 A REFORMED MODE OF SPELLING. [M] <i>buat ever hi difikultiz and inkanviniensiz nau er, he ul bi mor iizili syrmaunted nau, han birafiyx; and sym uyim av yhyr, it myst bi dyn; av cur ryitiy ul bikym hi sém wih hi Tshyiniiz ‡, az to hi difikulti av lurny and iuzy it. And it uuld alredi bev bin sytʃ, if ui bad kan-tinud hi Saksyn speliz and ryitiy, iuzed byi our forsahers.</i> <i>yi am, myi diir frind,</i> <i>iurs afekshynetli,</i> B. Franklin*. <i>Lyndyn,</i> <i>Kreven-strit,</i> <i>Sept. 28, 1768.</i> ‡ Chinese. * [Perhaps it would have been better to have had the new letters cast upright, in order to have suited with Roman instead of Italic characters: But it did not occur till too late.— If any false spelling has appeared in the above, it is as fair to attribute it to the editor as to the author. E.]	p. 478 A Reformed Mode of Spelling ˈhuætəv(e)ɪ ði ˈdɪfɪkʌltɪz ænd ɪnˌkɒnˈviːniənsɪz nɒu ˈɛr, ðe ʊl bi mɔɪ ˈɪːzɪli ˌsɪrˈmaʊntɛd ˈnɒu, ðæn hi ˌɪæftər; ænd ˈsʌm tʌɪm ɒr ˈʌðər, ɪt mʌst bi ˈdʌn; ɒɪ ɒv ˈlʌɪtɪŋ ʊl bi ˈkʌm ði ˈseːm ʊɪð ði ˌtʃʌɪˈniːz, æz tɔ ði ˈdɪfɪkʌltɪ ɒv ˈlɜːnɪŋ ɪt ænd ˈjuːzɪŋ ɪt. ænd ɪt ʊld ɒlˈrɛdi hev bɪn ˈsʌtʃ, ɪf ʊi hæd ˌkɒn-ˈtɪnʊd ði ˈsæksən ˌspeliŋ ænd ˈlʌɪtɪŋ, ˈjuːzɛd baɪ ɔr [sic] ˈfɔɪfæð(e)ɪz. laɪ ˈæm maɪ diːɪ ˈfrɪnd, juːz əˈfɛkʃənɛtli, B. Franklin ˌlʌndən ˈkreɪvən ˌstriːt Sept. 28, 1768.

The final two documents permit the reader to compare Stevenson's original September 26th draft letter with the version published by Vaughan in 1779. We have seen that there are nine different spellings (hence different pronunciations) which are contrasted in a table directly beneath the original documents. That Vaughan's final version should contain more errors than this apparent draft is somewhat perplexing.

Stevenson's draft September 26, 1768 letter to Franklin. Courtesy of the American Philosophical Society, https://diglib.amphilsoc.org/islandora/object/text%3A296114	Vaughan's printed version of this same letter. Courtesy of Internet Archives, University of California Digital Library, Hathitrust, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc2.ark:/13960/t5v698v1d
	472 A REFORMED MODE OF SPELLING. Kenshtyn, Septembyr 26, 1768. Diir Syr, yi hav transkryib'd iur alfabet, &c. buitfi yi hink myit bi cvo syrvis tu hoz, bu uifi ta akuyir an akiuret pronynsiefiyn, if hat kuld bi fixs d; byt yi fi meni inkcan-viimienfis, az uel az difikyltis, hat uuld atend hi brizij iur letyrs and carhcagrafi intu kamyn ius. caal caur etimalodfiiz uuld be last, kansfikuentli ui kuld nat asyrteen hi miiniy cvo meni uyrds; hi difinkfiyn, tu, bituiin uyrds cvo difyrent miiniy and fimilar scaund uuld bi iusles, ynles ui living rynters pyblifi nu iidifiyns. In fiart yi biliv ui myst let pipil spel an in heer old ue, and (az ui fyind it iisief) du hi seem caurselves.—With ease and with fincerity I can, in the old way, subfcibe myself Your affectionate humble Servant M Stevenson

Differences in Vaughan’s 1779 Rendering of Stevenson’s 1768 Manuscript Letter

Stevenson’s September 26, 1768 draft letter		Vaughan’s 1779 edition, p. 472	
<i>idifʏns</i>	[idɪfəns]	<i>iidifʏns</i>	[i:ˈdɪfəns]
<i>inkaʌnʋiniens</i>	[ɪnkənˈvi:niens]	<i>inkaʌnviiniens</i>	[ɪnkənˈvi:niens]
<i>piipil</i>	[ˈpi:pɪl]	<i>piipil</i>	[piːpɪl]
<i>difɪkʏltis</i>	[ˈdɪfɪkʌltɪʃ]	<i>difɪkʏltis</i>	[ˈdɪfɪkʌltɪʃ]
<i>aaurselvʌs</i>	[ˈɒʊrˈsɛlvʃ]	<i>aarselvʌs</i>	[ˈɒʊrˈsɛlvʃ]
<i>fɪks’d</i>	[fɪkst]	<i>fɪks’d</i>	[fɪkst]
<i>tu</i>	[tu]	<i>ta</i>	[ta]
<i>kaamʏn</i>	[ˈkɒmən]	<i>kaamin</i>	[ˈkɒmɪn]

NB: In her draft letter, she underlines ui “we” in the phrase *ʏnles ui liviŋ rʏityrs pʏblif nu idiuʏfʏns* “unless we living writers publish new editions.”



One question that arises here is why the page which accompanied the digitized version of the September 26th letter, and to which a red, wax seal is attached, should have been addressed to Polly Stevenson, i.e. “To Mys. Stevenson, at Mrs. Tickells in Church Lane, Kensington.” The ink from the opposite side of page has bled through here, but I cannot make out whether the writing is from Polly’s September 26th draft letter (which Franklin may have returned to her?) or whether she may have written it on the back of an, as of yet, undeciphered letter by Franklin. Indeed, I have wondered whether this letter, addressed to Polly Stevenson, may not be the missing September 28th letter written by Franklin. I

am currently in the process of contacting the American Philosophical Society Archives to answer this question.

Source 1: Chapter V. "Papers on Miscellaneous Subjects: A Reformed Mode of Spelling," *Political, Miscellaneous and Philosophical Pieces Written by Benjamin Franklin*, London, printed for J. Johnson, n° 72, Saint Paul's Churchyard, 1779. Reproduced here with the permission of the Internet Archives, University of California Digital Library, Hathitrust.

Source 2: "Benjamin Franklin to Mary (Polly) Stevenson Hewson," July 20, 1768, "Mary (Polly) Stevenson Hewson to Benjamin Franklin," September 26, 1768. "Scheme for a New Alphabet" (probably July 20, 1768). Reproduced here with the permission of the American Philosophical Society, Islandora Repository, Mss.B.F85, James S. and Frances M. Bradford Collection.

Appendix 3:

A Glossary of Franklin and Stevenson's RMS Transcriptions

In Appendix 3, the reader will find a glossary of all the words transcribed by Franklin and Stevenson in their “reformed mode of spelling.” This is found primarily in their correspondence as well as of Franklin’s transcription of Addison’s “Campaign” (1704).

For easy reference, the lefthand column contains a list of all the words recorded in the *Reformed Mode of Spelling* in alphabetical order and in American-English spelling. Those that are marked with a superscript ¹ indicate that these words were taken from Franklin’s July 20th letter. Those words marked with a superscript ² present the vocabulary taken from Polly Stevenson’s September 26th letter. All other unmarked vocabulary represents transcriptions of words that appear in Franklin’s September 28th letter.

In the second column from the left, the reader will find the same words spelt in Franklin’s reformed, proto-phonemic alphabet. Occasionally, one finds faulty transcriptions, especially from Franklin’s July 20th letter. These errors were analyzed separately in Chapter 27 of Part IV. In this list, I have included the corrected forms as they were indicated by Franklin himself within the body of his letter.

In column three from the left, I have interpreted the RMS transcriptions full forms as they might have been pronounced in disparitary speech as they were being slowly written or dictated. These represent very deliberate, syllabic pronunciations as each syllable was being pronounced individually.

In the fourth column from the left, the word is transcribed taking into account prosodic stress as it would have been in connected speech.

Finally, for comparative purposes, I have included adapted GA transcriptions. These are inspired from the 2005 edition of Wells’ LPS but, on occasion, adapted to my own accent ([ni:ɪ] for GA [nɪɪ], for example, which I believe is more common).

*For explanations about the IPA transcription here, please refer to Appendix 2.

NB: In the second column the numbers indicated in parenthesis indicate the number of occurrences. Note too that, based on his spelling of carriages as *karidfiz*, spellings such as *eedfes* “ages,” etc. could also presumably be interpreted as being pronounced [ˈeːdʒɪz].

For the sake of convenience, I have underlined those segments of words showing an absence of palatalization indicative of New England English (knowing that many southern English dialects shared the same feature, cf. Chapters 23 and 27). Note also that, just as in the Appendix 2, [ɛː] can also be read as [ɛ̃ː]. Please also note that, contrary to Franklin’s description of the long /i:/ and short /i/ phonemes being tense, I have simplified the transcriptions to include “lax” [ɪ] where relevant.

Word list US spelling	BF ¹ and PS ² s transcriptions	Franklin’s London-based syllabic pronunciation	Franklin’s Boston Paritary Register	General American
a	<i>e</i> (18)	[ɛ(:) ~ ɛ̃(:)]	[ɛː ~ ɛ̃ː] > [ə]	[eɪ ~ ə]
able	<i>ebil</i>	[ˈɛ(:)bɪl],	[ˈɛ̃(:)bɪ]	[ˈeɪbəl]
according	<i>akɔrdɪŋ</i>	[æˈkɔɹɪdɪŋ]	[aˈkɔɹɪdɪŋ]	[əˈkɔɹɪdɪŋ ~ əˈkɔɹɪdɪŋ]
accurate	<i>akiuret</i> ²	[ˈækɪu.ɹɛt]	[ˈækɪu.ɹət]	[ˈækjə.ɹət]
acquire	<i>akuɹɪr</i> (2)	[æˈkɪu.ɹɪəɹ]	[aˈkɪu.ɹɪəɹ]	[əˈkwaɹɪəɹ]
actually	<i>aktuali</i>	[ˈæktuali]	[ˈæktuəli]	[ˈæktʃuəli]
adherence	<i>adhirens</i> ¹	[ædˈhi.ɹɛns]	[ædˈhi.ɹəns]	[ədˈhiː.ɹəns]
admit	<i>admit</i>	[ædˈmɪt]	[ædˈmɪt]	[ədˈmɪt]
advantages	<i>advantedʒez</i>	[ædˈvæntədʒɛz]	[ædˈvæntɪdʒəz]	[ədˈvæntɪdʒɪz]
affectionately	<i>afekʃɹnetli</i> (3) ¹	[æˈfekʃɹnɛtli]	[aˈfekʃənɛtli]	[əˈfekʃənɛtli]
ages	<i>edfes ~ eedfes</i> ¹	[ˈɛːdʒɛʃ]	[ˈɛːdʒɪz]	[ˈeɪdʒɪz]
all	<i>ɑɑɑl</i> ² (4)	[ɔːl]	[ɔːl ~ ɑːl]	[ɑːɫ]
allow	<i>allɑɑu</i> ¹	[æˈlɔu]	[aˈlɔu]	[əˈlɑu]
(th’)almighty	<i>(ð’) ɑɑlmɹɪtis</i>	[(ð)ɔlˈmɹɪtɪʃ]	[(ð)ɔlˈmɹɪtɪ]	[ði ˌɑɫˈmɑrtɪ]
almost	<i>ɑɑmost</i>	[ˈɔlmɔst]	[ˈɔlmɔst ~ -mɹst]	[ˈɑːɫmoust]
alone	<i>alon</i>	[æˈlɔn]	[aˈlɔn] ~ [aˈlɹn]	[əˈlouən]
along	<i>alɔŋ</i>	[æˈlɔŋ]	[aˈlɔŋ] ~ [aˈlɹŋ]	[əˈlɑːŋ]
alphabet	<i>alfabet</i> ² (5)	[ˈælfabet],	[ˈælfəbet]	[ˈælfəbet]
already	<i>ɑɑredi</i> (4)	[ɔlˈɹɛdi]	[ɔlˈɹɛdi]	[ɑːɫˈɹɛdi]
always	<i>ɑɑuaz</i> [sic]	[ˈɔ(:)luæz] ~ ˈɔ(:)luɛz]	[ˈɔːluæɪz ~ -uɛɪz]	[ˈɑːɫwəz]
am	<i>am</i> (4)	[æm]	[æm]	[æm ~ əm]

Word list US spelling	BF ¹ and PS ² 's transcriptions	Franklin's London-based syllabic pronunciation	Franklin's Boston Paritary Register	General American
amendments	<i>amendments</i> ¹	[æ'mendments]	[æ'mendmənts]	[ə'mendmənts]
among	<i>amʌŋ</i> ¹	[æ'mʌŋ]	[a'mʌŋ]	[ə'mʌŋ]
an	<i>an</i> (2)	[æn]	[æn ~ ən]	[æn ~ ən]
and	<i>and</i> (50)	[ænd]	[ænd ~ ənd]	[ænd ~ ənd]
angel	<i>endʒel</i>	[ˈɛ(:)ndʒɛl]	[ˈɛ:nʒəl]	[ˈeɪndʒəl ~ˈeɪndʒɪ]
any	<i>eni</i>	[ˈeni]	[ˈeni]	[ˈeni]
are	<i>er</i> (8) <i>eer</i> ¹ (2)	[ɛɪ ~ ɛ:ɪ]	[ɛɪ ~ ɛ:ɪ ~ æ:ɪ]	[ɑ:ɪ ~ əɪ]
as	<i>az</i> (21)	[æz]	[æz]	[æz ~ əz]
ascertain	<i>asʌrteen</i> ² (3)	[.æsʌrˈte:n]	[.æsəɪˈte:n]	[.æsəɪˈtem]
at	<i>at</i> (4)	[æt]	[æt]	[æt ~ ət]
attain	<i>atēn</i>	[æˈte:n]	[aˈte:n]	[əˈtem]
attempted	<i>attempted</i> ¹ [sic]	[æˈtɛmtɛd]	[aˈtɛmtəd]	[əˈtɛmtɪd]
attend	<i>atend</i> ² (2)	[æˈtɛnd]	[aˈtɛnd]	[əˈtɛnd]
attended	<i>atended</i> (4) ¹	[æˈtɛndɛd]	[aˈtɛndəd]	[əˈtɛndɪd]
bad	<i>bad</i> (3)	[bæd]	[bæd]	[bæ:d]
be	<i>be</i> ² (1) <i>bi</i> (21)	[bi:]	[bi:]	[bi:]
because	<i>bikæz</i>	[biˈkɔ:z]	[biˈkɔ:z]	[biˈkɑ:z ~ brˈkʌz]
become	<i>bikʌm</i>	[biˈkʌm]	[biˈkɔ:m]	[biˈkʌm]
been	<i>bin</i> (4)	[bin ~ bɪn]	[bɪn]	[bɪn]
beginning	<i>biginiŋ</i>	[biˈɡiniŋ]	[biˈɡmiŋ]	[biˈɡmiŋ]
being	<i>biin</i> (2)	[ˈbi:iŋ]	[ˈbi:iŋ]	[ˈbi:iŋ]
believe	<i>biliiv</i> ²	[biˈli:v]	[biˈli:v]	[biˈli:v]
besides	<i>bisʌidz</i>	[biˈsʌidz]	[biˈsɪdɪz]	[biˈsʌidz]
better	<i>beter</i> ¹ [sic]	[ˈbetəɪ]	[ˈbetəɪ]	[ˈbetʃəɪ]
between	<i>bituiin</i> ² (2)	[biˈtwi:n]	[biˈtui:n]	[biˈtwi:n]
blast	<i>blast</i>	[blæst]	[blæst ~ blɛ(:)st]	[blæ:st]
books	<i>buks</i> (4)	[bʌks ~ bʊks]	[bʌks ~ brʌks?]	[bʊks]
border	<i>bɑrdʌr</i>	[ˈbɔ:rdəɪ]	[ˈbɔ:rdəɪ]	[ˈbɔ:rdəɪ ~ ˈbɔ:rdəɪ]
bosom	<i>bʌzʌm</i>	[ˈbʌzəm]	[ˈbrʌzəm]	[ˈbuzəm ~ -zɪm]
bring	<i>brin</i> ¹	[brɪŋ]	[brɪŋ]	[brɪŋ]
bringing	<i>briniŋ</i> ²	[ˈbrɪniŋ]	[ˈbrɪniŋ]	[ˈbrɪniŋ]

Word list US spelling	BF ¹ and PS ² 's transcriptions	Franklin's London-based syllabic pronunciation	Franklin's Boston Paritary Register	General American
Britannia	<i>Britania</i>	[bɹi'tænia]	[b.ɹi'tænia]	[b.ɹi'tænjə]
brought	<i>braat</i> ¹	[b.ɹɔ:t]	[b.ɹɔ:t]	[bɹɔt]
busy	<i>bizi</i> ¹	['bɹɪzi]	['bɹɪzi]	['bɹɪzi]
but	<i>bʏt</i> ² (9)	[bɹɔt] ~ [bɹɔt]	[bɹɔt]	[bɹɔt]
by	<i>bʏi</i> (8)	[bɹɔi]	[bɹɔi]	[baɪ]
call	<i>kaal</i>	[kɔ:l]	[kɔ:l]	[kɑ:t]
calm	<i>kalm</i>	[kælm]	[kæ:lm]	[kɑ:m]
can	<i>kan</i>	[kæn]	[kæn]	[kæn ~ kən]
cannot	<i>kanaa / kannaa</i> ¹ [sic]	[kæ'nɔt]	[kæ'nɔt]	[kæ'na:t ~ kæ'nɔt]
carriages	<i>karidʒiz</i>	['kæ.ɹɪdʒɪz]	['kæ.ɹɪdʒɪz]	['kæ.ɹɪdʒɪz]
case	<i>kes</i> (3)	[ke(:)s]	[ke(:)s]	[keɪs]
cease	<i>siis</i> ¹	[si:s]	[se:s]	[si:s]
centuries	<i>senturiz</i> ¹	['sentʊ.ɹɪz]	['sentʊ.ɹɪz]	['sentʃə.ɹɪz]
change	<i>tʃendʒ</i> (1)	[tʃe:nʒ]	[tʃe:nʒ]	[tʃeɪnʒ]
changes	<i>tʃeendʒes</i> ¹	[tʃe:nʒes]	[tʃe:nʒɪz]	[tʃeɪnʒɪz]
changed	<i>tʃendʒd / tʃendʒed</i> [sic]	[tʃe:nʒd]	[tʃe:nʒd]	[tʃeɪnʒd]
changing	<i>tʃendʒɪŋ</i>	['tʃe:nʒɪŋ]	['tʃe:nʒɪŋ]	['tʃeɪnʒɪŋ]
cherry	<i>tʃeri</i>	['tʃe.ɹɪ]	['tʃe.ɹɪ]	['tʃe.ɹɪ]
Chinese	<i>Tʃɪniiz / Tʃuiniiz</i> ¹ [sic]	[tʃɹi'ni:z]	[tʃɹi'ni:z]	[tʃaɹ'ni:z]
chip	<i>tʃɪp</i>	['tʃɪp]	['tʃɪp]	['tʃɪp]
clear	<i>kliɹ</i>	[kli:ɹ]	[kle:ɹ]	[kli:ɹ]
come	<i>kʏm</i>	[kɹɔm]	[kɹɔm]	[kɹɔm]
command	<i>kaamand</i>	[kɔ'mænd]	[kə'mænd]	[kə'mæ:nd]
common	<i>kaamin</i> ² ~ <i>kaamɪn</i>	['kɔmɪn] ~ ['kɔmən]	['kɔmɪn]	['kəməɪn ~ 'kəmɪn]
compared	<i>kʏmpêrd</i>	[kɔm'pe:ɹd]	[kɔm'pe:ɹd]	[kə'm'pe:ɹd]
completed	<i>kaamplited</i> ¹	[kɔm'plɪtɪd]	[kɔm'plɪtɪd]	[kə'm'pli:tɪd]
condition	<i>kaandɪʃʏn</i> ¹	[kɔn'dɪʃən]	[kɔn'dɪʃən]	[kən'dɪʃən ~ -ʃɪn]
confident	<i>kaanfident</i>	['kɔnfɪdɪnt]	['kɔ:nfɪdɪnt]	['kə:nfɪdɪnt]
consequently	<i>kaansikuentli</i> ² (2)	['kɔnsɪkuentli]	['kɔnsɪkuentli]	['kə:nsɪkwɛntli]
consider	<i>kaansider</i> ¹ [sic]	[kɔn'sɪdəɪ]	[kɔn'sɪdəɪ]	[kən'sɪdəɪ]

Word list US spelling	BF ¹ and PS ² 's transcriptions	Franklin's London-based syllabic pronunciation	Franklin's Boston Paritary Register	General American
considered	<i>kaansidered</i> ¹ [sic]	[kən'sɪdəɪd]	[kən'sɪdəɪd]	[kən'sɪdəɪd]
continually	<i>kaantinu^uali</i>	[kən'tɪnu ^u ali]	[kən'tɪnu ^u ə,li]	[kən'tɪnjuəli]
continue	<i>kaantinu</i> ¹	[kən'tɪnu]	[kən'tɪnu]	[kən'tɪnju:]
continued	<i>kaantinud</i>	[kən'tɪnu:d]	[kən'tɪnu:d]	[kən'tɪnju:d]
contrary	<i>kaantreri</i>	['kɒntɪɛ.ri]	['kɒntɪɛ.ri]	['ka:ntɪɛ.ri]
could	<i>kuld</i> ² (3)	[kuld ~ kʊld]	[kuld]	[kʊd]
course	<i>kors</i> (3)	[kɔɪs]	[kɔɪs]	[kɔɪs ~ kɔ:s]
Craven Street	<i>Kreven- striit</i>	['kɪɛ(:)ven 'stɪi:t]	['kɪɛ(:)ven 'stɪi:t]	['kɪɛv ⁿ 'stɪi:t]
customs	<i>kystyms</i> ¹	['kɒstəmʃ]	['krɒstəmz]	['kɒstəmz]
daily	<i>dēli</i> ¹	['de:li ~ dɛ:li]	['de:li ~ 'dɛ:li]	['dɛnli]
dear	<i>diir</i> ² (5)	[di:ɪ]	[de:ɪ]	[di:ɪ]
defending	<i>difendiŋ</i>	[di'fɛndɪŋ]	[di'fɛndɪŋ]	[di'fɛndɪŋ]
degrees	<i>digriis</i>	[di'gɪi:z]	[di'gɪi:z]	[dr'gɪi:z]
destroyed	<i>distraayid</i> (2)	[dɪs'tɹaɪd ~ dɪs'tɹɔɪd]	[dɪs'tɹɔɪd]	[dɪs'tɹɔɪd ~ dɪs'tɹɔɪd]
determined	<i>dityrmined</i> (1)	[di'tɹɪmɪnd]	[dr'tɹɪmɪnd]	[dr'tɹɪmɪnd]
divine	<i>divyin</i>	[di'vaɪn]	[dr'vɪn]	[dr'vam ~ di'vam]
different	<i>difɹent</i> ² (2)	['dɪfɪɛnt]	['dɪfɪɛnt]	['dɪfɪɛnt]
difficult	<i>dɪfɪkɪlt</i> (1)	['dɪfɪkɒlt] ~ ['dɪfɪkɒlt]	['dɪfɪkɒlt]	['dɪfɪkɒlt]
difficulty	<i>dɪfɪkɪlti</i> (6)	['dɪfɪkɒlti] ~ ['dɪfɪkɒlti]	['dɪfɪkɒltəi]	['dɪfɪkɒlti]
difficulties	<i>dɪfɪkɪltis</i> ² (7)	['dɪfɪkɒltɪʃ] ~ ['dɪfɪkɒltɪʃ]	['dɪfɪkɒltɪz]	['dɪfɪkɒltɪz]
directs	<i>dɪɹekts</i>	[dɪɪ'ɹɛkts]	[drɪ'ɹɛkts]	[dr'ɹɛkts] [dɛ'ɹɛkts]
discourse	<i>diskors (kors!)</i>	['dɪskɔɪs]	['dɪs,kɔɪs]	['dɪskɔɪs ~ 'dɪskɔɪs]
distinction	<i>distɪnkʃɪn</i> ² (3)	[dɪs'tɪŋkʃən]	[dɪs'tɪŋkʃən]	[dɪs'tɪŋkʃ ⁿ]
do	<i>du</i> ² (4)	[du:]	[du:]	[du: ~ də]
done	<i>dɪn</i> (1)	[dɒn ~ [dʌn]	[dʌn]	[dʌn]
down	<i>daaon</i>	[dʌun]	[dʌun]	[daʊn]
drives	<i>drɪvɪs</i>	[dɪɪvɪʃ]	[drɪvɪʒ]	[dɪɪvɪʒ]
each	<i>iɪtʃ</i>	[i:tʃ]	[ɛ:tʃ]	[i:tʃ]
easiest	<i>iɪsiest² & iɪsiest</i> (1768)	[i:siest] [sic]	['ɛ:ziəɪst]	['i:ziɪst]

Word list US spelling	BF ¹ and PS ² 's transcriptions	Franklin's London-based syllabic pronunciation	Franklin's Boston Paritary Register	General American
easily	<i>iizili</i>	[i:zili]	[e:ziləi]	[i:zili]
editions	<i>idifʏns</i> ² (1768) <i>iidifʏns</i> ²	[i:'diʃəns]	[i(:)'diʃənz]	[r'diʃənz]
either	<i>ʏidʏr</i>	[ʔiðəɪ]	[ʔiðəɪ]	[aɪðəɪ ~ i:ðəɪ]
English	<i>ɪŋliʃ</i>	[ɪŋliʃ]	[ɪŋliʃ]	[ɪŋliʃ]
etymology	<i>etimaʊlodʒi</i>	[ɛtr'mʊlədʒi]	[ɛtr'mʊlədʒi]	[ɛtr'ma-ɦdʒi]
etymologies	<i>etimaʊlodʒiz</i> ² (3)	[ɛtr'mʊlədʒiz]	[ɛtr'mʊlədʒiz]	[ɛtr'ma-ɦdʒiz]
etymologists	<i>etimaʊlodʒists</i> (1)	[ɛti'mʊlədʒists]	[ɛti'mʊlədʒists]	[ɛti'ma-ɦdʒists]
Europe	<i>Iuɒp</i> ¹	[i'uɒp]	[i'uɒp]	[j'u:ɒp]
even	<i>iven</i>	[i:vən]	[e:vŋ]	[i:vən ~ i:vŋ]
ever	<i>evʏr</i>	[evəɪ]	[evəɪ]	[evəɪ]
express	<i>eksɒres</i>	[eks'pɹɛs]	[eks'pɹɛs]	[eks'pɹɛs]
expressed	<i>eksɒrest</i> ¹	[eks'pɹɛst]	[eks'pɹɛst]	[eks'pɹɛst]
fair	<i>feer</i>	[fe:ɪ]	[fe:ɪ ~ fæ:ɪ]	[fɛɪ]
fall	<i>fʌl</i>	[fɒ(:)l]	[fɒ(:)l]	[fɑ:ɫ]
familiar	<i>fʌmiliʏr</i>	[fæ'miliəɪ]	[fə'miliəɪ]	[fə'mɪljəɪ]
far	<i>far</i>	[fæɪ]	[fæɪ]	[fɑ:ɪ]
feebleness	<i>fiiibilnes</i> ¹	[fi:bɪl,nɛs]	[fi:bɪl,nɛs]	[fi:bɪl,nɛs]
fever	<i>fivʏr</i> ¹	[fi(:)vəɪ]	[fi(:)vəɪ]	[fi:vəɪ]
few	<i>fiu</i> (2)	[fiu]	[fiu]	[fju:]
find	<i>fʏind</i> ² (2)	[fʌind]	[fɹind]	[faɪnd]
first	<i>fʏrst</i>	[fəɪst]	[fəɪst] ~ [fɛɪst]	[fəɪst]
fixed	<i>fixsd</i> ² & <i>fiksd</i> ² (1768)	[fɪkst]	[fɪkst]	[fɪkst]
floating	<i>flotiŋ</i>	[flɔtiŋ]	[flɔ(:)tiŋ]	[flʊotiŋ]
flower	<i>flaʊɒr</i>	[flʊəɪ]	[flʊəɪ]	[flaʊəɪ]
followed	<i>fʌlo'd</i>	[fɒləd]	[fɒləd]	[fɑ:ləʊd]
for	<i>fʌɒr</i> (6)	[fɒ:ɪ]	[fɒ:ɪ ~ fɔɪ]	[fɒɪ ~ fɔɪ ~ fəɪ]
forefathers	<i>forfaðers</i>	[fɔɪfæðəɪʃ] [sic]	[fɔɪfæðəɪz]	[fɔɪfɑ:ðəɪz]
foreigners	<i>faʊrenʏrs</i> (p. 475)	[fɔ:ɹɛnəɪz]	[fɔ:ɹɛnəɪz]	[fɔ:ɹənəɪz ~fɔɹənəɪz]
forget	<i>faʊget</i>	[fɒɪ'get]	[fɒɪ'grt]	[fəɪ'get]
forgot	<i>faʊgaʊt</i> ¹	[fɒɪ'gɔt]	[fɒɪ'gɔt] ~ [-gɹt]	[fəɪ'gɔt]

Word list US spelling	BF ¹ and PS ² 's transcriptions	Franklin's London-based syllabic pronunciation	Franklin's Boston Paritary Register	General American
formerly	<i>faərmerli</i>	[fɒ(:).ɪmɛ.ɹli]	[fɒ.ɪmə.ɹləi]	[fɔ.ɪmə.ɹli]
foul	<i>faʊl</i>	[fɒʊl]	[fɹʊl]	[faʊt]
found	<i>faʊnd</i>	[fɒʊnd]	[fɹʊnd]	[faʊnd]
friend	<i>frind & frend</i> ¹	[fɹɪnd ~ fɹɛnd]	[fɹɪnd]	[fɹɛnd]
from	<i>fraəm</i> (2)	[fɹɒm]	[fɹɪm]	[fɹɪɪm ~ fɹəm]
furious	<i>feurius</i>	[fɛʊ.ɹiʊs] (3 syls)	[fɹjʊ.ɹiəs]	[fɹjə.ɹiəs]
get	<i>git</i>	[gɪt]	[gɪt]	[get]
give	<i>giv</i> ¹	[gɪv ~ gɪv]	[gɪv]	[gɪv]
go	<i>go</i> ¹	[gɒ(:)]	[gɹʊ]	[gou]
good	<i>gud</i> (2)	[gʊd]	[gʊd ~ gɹd]	[gʊd]
government	<i>gʊvernment</i>	[gʌvɛ.ɪnmɛnt]	[gɹvə.ɪnmənt]	[gʌvə.ɪnmənt]
gradually	<i>graduali</i> (3)	[gɹædʊ.ɹɛli]	[gɹædʊ.ɹɛli]	[gɹædʒʊ.ɹɛli]
great	<i>grêt</i> (2)	[gɹɛ:t]	[gɹɛ:t]	[gɹɛɪt]
greater	<i>greter</i> ¹	[gɹɛ(:).tɛɹ]	[gɹɛ(:).tɛɹ]	[gɹɛɪtɛɹ]
grow	<i>gro</i> ¹	[gɹɒ(:)]	[gɹɒ(:).z ~ gɹɹʊz]	[gɹɒʊ]
grows	<i>groz</i>	[gɹɒ(:).z]	[gɹɒ(:).z]	[gɹɒʊz]
guilty	<i>gilti</i>	[gɪlti]	[gɪlti]	[gɪlti]
had	<i>had</i> (3)	[hæd]	[hɛd]	[hæd ~ hɛd]
happened	<i>hapend</i>	[hæpɛnd]	[hɛpənd]	[hæpənd ~ -pnd]
hardly	<i>hardli</i> (2)	[hæɹdli]	[hæ.ɹdli]	[hɑ.ɹdli]
has	<i>hes</i> (1) <i>hez</i> (3)	[hɛ(:).z]	[hez]	[hæ:z ~ həz]
have	<i>hav</i> ² (1) <i>hev</i> (7)	[hɛ(:).v]	[hev]	[hæ:v ~ həv]
he	<i>hi</i> (7)	[hi]	[hi ~ heɪ]	[hi:]
heaven	<i>hev'n</i>	[hɛvɛn]	[hɹɪvən]	[hɛvən ~ -vɪ]
help ¹	<i>help</i> ¹	[help]	[help]	[help]
hereafter	<i>hiraftʏr</i>	[hi'ɹæftɛɹ]	[hi'ɹæftɛɹ ~ hɛ'ɹæftɛɹ]	[hi'ɹæftɛɹ]
him	<i>him</i>	[hɪm]	[hɪm ~ him]	[hɪm]
his	<i>his</i>	[hɪz]	[hɪz ~ hiz]	[hɪz]
however	<i>haəueve(y)r</i> ¹ [sic]	[hɒʊ'evəɹ]	[hɹʊ'evəɹ]	[hau'evəɹ]
hurrying	<i>hʏrʏɪŋ</i> (1)	[hʌɹɪ.ɪŋ]	[hɹɹɪ.ɪŋ]	[hʌɹɪ.ɪŋ ~ həɹɪ.ɪŋ]

Word list US spelling	BF ¹ and PS ² 's transcriptions	Franklin's London-based syllabic pronunciation	Franklin's Boston Paritary Register	General American
I	<i>qi</i> (16)	[Δi] ~ [Δi]	[vi]	[aɪ]
Idea	<i>qidia</i>	[Δi'di(:)a]	[vi'di-ə]	[aɪ'diə]
if	<i>if</i> (9)	[ɪf]	[ɪf]	[ɪf]
imagine]	<i>imadzɪn</i>	[i'mædʒɪn]	[i'mædʒɪn]	[i'mædʒɪn ~ -dʒɪn]
imperfection	<i>impurɸekʃɪn</i>	[,ɪmpəɹ'fɛkʃən]	[,ɪmpəɹ'fɛkʃən]	[,ɪmpəɹ'fɛkʃən ~ -ʃɪn]
impossible	<i>impɑsibil</i>	[ɪm'pɒsɪbɪl]	[ɪm'pɒsɪbəl]	[ɪm'pɑ:sɪbʔ ~ -bʔ]
in	<i>in</i> (26)	[ɪn]	[ɪn]	[ɪn]
inconvenience	<i>inkaənviens</i> (3)	[,ɪnkən'vi(:)niens]	[,ɪnkən'vi:niəns]	[,ɪŋkən'vi:njəns]
inconveniences	<i>inkaənviensiz</i> (4)	[,ɪnkən'vi:niənsɪz]	[,ɪŋkən'vi:niənsɪz]	[,ɪŋkən'vi:njənsɪz]
increasing	<i>inkriisɪŋ</i>	[ɪn'kɹi:sɪŋ]	[ɪŋ'kɹi:sɪŋ]	[ɪŋ'kɹi:sɪŋ]
indeed	<i>indiid¹</i>	[ɪn'di:d]	[ɪn'di:d ~ m'dɛ:d]	[ɪn'di:d]
indisposed	<i>indispozɪd¹</i>	[,ɪndɪs'pɔ(:)zɪd]	[,ɪndɪs'pɔ(:)zɪd]	[,ɪndɪs'pouzɪd]
inhabitant	<i>inhabitant</i>	[ɪn'hæbɪtænt]	[ɪn'hæbɪtənt]	[ɪn'hæbɪtənt]
inhabitants	<i>inhabitants</i>	[ɪn'hæbɪtænts]	[ɪn'hæbɪtənts]	[ɪn'hæbɪtənts]
instances	<i>instanses¹</i>	[ˈɪnstænes]	[ˈɪnstən,səz]	[ˈɪnstən,səz]
intend	<i>intend</i>	[ɪn'tend]	[ɪn'tend]	[ɪn'tend]
intended	<i>intended¹</i>	[ɪn'tended]	[ɪn'tendəd]	[ɪn'tendɪd]
into	<i>intu</i> (2) <i>into¹</i>	[ˈɪntɔ ~ ˈmtu]	[ɪntɔ]	[ˈmtu]
is	<i>iz</i> (16), <i>is</i> (2)	[ɪz]	[ɪz]	[ɪz]
it	<i>it</i> (6)	[ɪt]	[ɪt]	[ɪt]
it is	<i>tiz</i> (19)	[tɪz]	[tɪz]	[ɪt ɪz]
Italian	<i>Italien</i>	[ɪ'tæliən]	[ɪ'tæliən]	[ɪ'tæljən]
Italy	<i>Iteli</i>	[ˈɪteli]	[ˈɪteli]	[ˈɪtʰli]
its	<i>its</i> (3)	[ɪts]	[ɪts]	[ɪts]
itself	<i>itself</i>	[ɪt'self]	[ɪt'self]	[ɪt'self]
James	<i>dʒeems</i>	[dʒɛ:mʃ]	[dʒɛ:mʃ]	[dʒeɪmz]
January	<i>dʒanueri</i>	[ˈdʒænu.ɛ.ɪ]	[ˈdʒænu.ɛ.ɪ]	[ˈdʒænjʊ.ɛ.ɪ]
gentle	<i>dʒentel</i>	[ˈdʒentəl]	[ˈdʒentəl]	[ˈdʒentət ~ -ntʔ]
giant	<i>dʒɪant</i>	[ˈdʒΔiənt]	[ˈdʒviənt]	[ˈdʒaɪənt]

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July	<i>dfuly</i> ¹	[dʒuˈlɪ]	[dʒuˈlɪ]	[dʒuˈlaɪ ~ dʒəˈlaɪ]
Kensington ²	<i>Kensintyn</i>	[ˈkɛnsɪntən]	[ˈkɛnsɪntən]	[ˈkɛnzɪntən]
knave	<i>neev</i>	[nɛ:v]	[nɛ:v]	[nɛv]
lad	<i>lad</i>	[læd]	[læd]	[læ:d]
land	<i>land</i>	[lænd]	[lænd]	[læ:nd]
language	<i>languedʒ</i> (3) <i>languadj</i> ¹	[ˈlæŋɡwɛdʒ]	[ˈlæŋɡwɛdʒ]	[ˈlæŋɡwɪdʒ]
last	<i>last</i> ¹	[læst]	[lɛst]	[læ:st]
lasting	<i>lastɪŋ</i>	[ˈlæstɪŋ]	[lɛstɪŋ]	[ˈlæ:stɪŋ]
late	<i>leet</i>	[lɛ:t]	[lɛ:t]	[lɛt]
Latin	<i>Latin</i> (2)	[ˈlætɪn]	[ˈlætɪn]	[ˈlætən]
latter	<i>latyr</i>	[ˈlætəɪ]	[ˈlætəɪ]	[ˈlætəɪ]
laws	<i>laəz</i>	[lɒ:z]	[lɒ:z ~ lɑ:z]	[lɑ:z ~ lɒ:z]
learn	<i>lyrn</i> (1)	[ˈlɛɪn]	[ˈlæɪn]	[ˈlɛɪn]
learning	<i>lyrnɪŋ</i> (3)	[ˈlɛɪnɪŋ]	[ˈlæɪnɪŋ]	[ˈlɛɪnɪŋ]
least	<i>list</i>	[lɪ(:)st]	[lɛ:st]	[lɪst]
leisurely	<i>lezfurli</i>	[ˈlɛʒurli]	[ˈlɛʒəlɪ]	[ˈlɛʒəlɪ ~ ˈli:ʒəlɪ]
let	<i>let</i> ²	[lɛt]	[lɛt]	[lɛt]
letter	<i>letyr</i> (1)	[ˈlɛtəɪ]	[ˈlɛtəɪ]	[ˈlɛtəɪ]
letters	<i>letyrs</i> ² (1) <i>letters</i> ¹ [sic]	[ˈlɛtəɪʃ]	[ˈlɛtəɪz]	[ˈlɛtəɪz]
like	<i>lyik</i> ¹	[lɪɪk]	[lɪɪk]	[lɪɪk]
limpid	<i>limpid</i>	[ˈlɪmpɪd]	[ˈlɪmpɪd]	[ˈlɪmpɪd]
literal	<i>literal</i> ¹ [sic]	[ˈlɪtəɪəl]	[ˈlɪtəɪəl]	[ˈlɪtəɪəl]
living	<i>livɪŋ</i> (2)	[ˈlɪvɪŋ]	[ˈlɪvɪŋ ~ ˈlɪvɪŋ]	[ˈlɪvɪŋ]
London	<i>Lyndyn</i>	[ˈlɒndən]	[ˈlɒndən]	[ˈlɒndən]
long	<i>lon</i>	[lɒŋ]	[lɒŋ]	[lɑ:ŋ]
longer	<i>laenge(y)r</i> ¹ [sic]	[ˈlɒŋɡəɪ]	[ˈlɒŋɡəɪ]	[ˈlɑ:ŋɡəɪ]
look	<i>luk</i>	[lʊk]	[lʊk]	[lʊk]
lost	<i>laast</i> ² (3)	[lɒst]	[lɒst]	[lɑ:st]
low	<i>lo</i>	[lɒ(:)]	[lɒ(:) ~ lɒu]	[lou]

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madam	<i>madam</i>	[ˈmædæm],	[ˈmædəm],	[ˈmæ:dəm ~ ˈmæ:dɪn]
make	<i>meek</i> (1)	[mɛ:k]	[mɛ:k]	[meɪk]
makes	<i>mēks</i> (1)	[mɛ:ks]	[mɛ:ks]	[meɪks]
man	<i>man</i>	[ˈmæn]	[ˈmæn]	[ˈmæ:n]
manner	<i>mana(y)r</i> ¹ [sic]	[ˈmænəɪ]	[ˈmænəɪ]	[ˈmæ:nəɪ]
many	<i>meni</i> ² (4)	[ˈmeni]	[ˈmenəɪ]	[ˈmeni]
may	<i>mee</i> ¹ (2) <i>mē</i> (2)	[mɛ:]	[mɛ:]	[meɪ]
me	<i>mi</i> (3)	[mi(:)]	[mɛɪ]	[mi:]
meaning	<i>miiniŋ</i> ² (3)/ <i>miniŋ</i> (2)	[ˈmi:nɪŋ]	[ˈmɛ:nɪŋ]	[ˈmi:nɪŋ]
meanings	<i>miiniŋs/miniŋs</i>	[ˈmi:nɪŋz]	[ˈmɛ:nɪŋz]	[ˈmi:nɪŋz]
mended	<i>mended</i> ¹	[ˈmɛndəd]	[ˈmɛndəd]	[ˈmɛndɪd]
mention	<i>menʃɪn</i>	[ˈmɛnʃən]	[ˈmɛnʃən]	[ˈmɛnʃən]
mere	<i>miir</i>	[mi:ɪ]	[mɛ:ɪ]	[mi:ɪ]
method	<i>meθɪd</i>	[ˈmɛθɔd]	[ˈmɛθəd]	[ˈmɛθəd]
might	<i>myit</i> ² (2)	[mɑt]	[mɪt]	[maɪt]
mirror	<i>mirɪr</i>	[ˈmiɪəɪ]	[ˈmiɪəɪ]	[ˈmiɪəɪ]
mode	<i>mod</i> (3)	[mɔ(:)d]	[mɔ(:)d]	[mɔd]
more	<i>mor</i> (6)	[mɔ(:)ɪ]	[mɔɪ]	[mɔuɪ]
mother	<i>myðe(y)r</i> ¹ [sic]	[ˈmʌðəɪ]	[ˈmɪðəɪ]	[ˈmʌðəɪ]
much	<i>mytʃ</i> ¹ (3)	[mʌtʃ]	[mɛtʃ]	[mʌtʃ]
must	<i>myst</i> ² (5)	[mʌst]	[mɪst]	[mʌst]
my	<i>myi</i> (2)	[mʌɪ]	[mɪɪ]	[maɪ]
natural	<i>natural</i>	[ˈnætʃʊ.əl]	[ˈnætʃʊ.əl]	[ˈnætʃʰ.əl]
naturally	<i>natʃrəli</i>	[ˈnætʃʊ.əli]	[ˈnætʃʊ.əli]	[ˈnætʃʰ.əli]
never	<i>nevɪr / neve(y)r</i> ¹ [sic]	[ˈnevəɪ]	[ˈnevəɪ]	[ˈnevəɪ]
new	<i>nu</i> ² (9)	[nu(:)]	[nu(:)]	[nu: ~ nju:]
no	<i>no</i> (3)	[nɔ(:)]	[nu] [nɪu]	[nɔʊ]
not	<i>not</i> (1), <i>naat</i> (9)	[nɔ(:)t]	[nɔ(:)t ~ nɪt]	[nɑ:t]
now	<i>naau</i> (5)	[nɔu]	[nɪu]	[nau]
objection	<i>æbdʒɛkʃɪn</i>	[ɒbˈdʒɛkʃən]	[ɒbˈdʒɛkʃən]	[əbˈdʒɛkʃən ~ ʃɪn]

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obstinate	<i>aabstinet</i> ¹	[ˈɒbstɪ.net]	[ˈɒbstɪ.net]	[ˈɒbstɪ.net]
occurs	<i>aakʊrz</i>	[ɒ'kəɪz]	[ɒ'kəɪz]	[ə'kəɪz]
of	<i>ov</i> ¹ / <i>aav</i> (27)	[ɒv]	[ɒv ~ ʁv]	[ʌv ~ əv]
off	<i>aaf</i> (5)	[ɒf]	[ɒf]	[ɒf]
old ²	<i>old</i> (7)	[ɒ(:)ld]	[ɒ(:)ld]	[ould]
on	<i>aam</i> (8)	[ɒn]	[ɒn]	[a:n]
once	<i>uyns</i> (2)	[uʌns]	[uɣns]	[wʌns]
one	<i>uyn</i> (2)	[uʌn]	[uɣn]	[wʌn]
only	<i>onli</i> (7)	[ɒ(:)nli]	[ɒ(:)nli]	[ˈounli]
orders	<i>aardʊrs</i>	[ˈɒɪdəɪʃ]	[ˈɒɪdəɪʃ]	[ˈɒɪdəɪz]
original	<i>oridʒinal</i> ¹	[ɒ'ɪdʒɪnəl]	[ɒ'ɪdʒɪnəl]	[ə'ɪdʒɪnəl]
originally	<i>oridʒinali</i> (2)	[ɒ'ɪdʒɪnəli]	[ɒ'ɪdʒɪnələi]	[ə'ɪdʒɪnəli],
orthography	<i>aarθaagrafi</i> ²	[ɒɪ'θɒgɪæfi]	[ɒɪ'θɒgɪafi]	[ɔɪ'θɑ:gɪæfi ~ ɔɪ'θɑ:]
other	<i>ʏðʊr</i> (3)	[ˈʌðəɪ]	[ˈɣðəɪ]	[ˈʌðəɪ]
others	<i>ʏðe(ʏ)rs</i> ¹ [sic]	[ˈʌðəɪs]	[ˈɣðəɪz]	[ˈʌðəɪz]
our	<i>our</i> (1) / <i>aaur</i> (8)	[ɒuɪ]	[ɒɪ]	[aʊɪ ~ a:ɪ]
ourselves	<i>aaurselfes</i> ² [sic] <i>aaurselvs</i> ²	[ɒuɪ'selvʃ]	[ɒɪ'selvz]	[aʊɪ'selvz]
over	<i>ovʊr</i>	[ɒ(:)vəɪ]	[ɒ(:)vəɪ]	[ˈouvəɪ]
overcome	<i>aavʊrkʊm</i>	[ɒvəɪ'kʌm]	[ɒvəɪ'kɣm]	[ɒuvəɪ'kʌm]
pale	<i>peel</i>	[pe:l]	[pe:l]	[peɪ]
papers	<i>pepers</i> ¹ [sic]	[ˈpe(:)pəɪʃ]	[ˈpe(:)pəɪz]	[ˈpeɪpəɪz]
particularly	<i>partikularli</i>	[pæɪ'tɪkʊləɪli]	[pæɪ'tɪkʊləɪləi]	[pæɪ'tɪkjʊləɪli]
past	<i>past</i> (2)	[pæst]	[pæst ~ pest]	[pæ:st]
people	<i>pipil</i> ¹ / <i>piipil</i> ² (2)	[ˈpi:pɪl]	[ˈpi:pəl]	[ˈpi:pət ~ ˈpi:pɪ]
perfectly	<i>perfektli</i> ¹ 1768 <i>pyrfektli</i>	[ˈpeɪfektləi] ~ [ˈpæfektli]	[ˈpeɪfektləi]	[ˈpæfektli]
perform	<i>pyrfærm</i>	[pæɪ'fɔɪm]	[pæɪ'fɔɪm]	[pæɪ'fɔɪm ~ pæɪ'fɔɪm]
persuaded	<i>persuaded</i> ¹ [sic]	[peɪ.suæ(:)dəd] [sic]	[peɪ.suæ(:)dəd]	[pæɪ'sweɪdɪd]
pleased	<i>pliiz'd</i>	[pli:zd]	[ple:zd]	[pli:zd]
Polly	<i>Paadi</i> ¹	[ˈpɒli]	[ˈpɒləi]	[ˈpa:li]

Word list US spelling	BF ¹ and PS ² 's transcriptions	Franklin's London-based syllabic pronunciation	Franklin's Boston Paritary Register	General American
practice	<i>praktis</i>	[ˈpɹæktɪs]	[ˈpɹæktɪs]	[ˈpɹæktɪs]
practiced	<i>praktist</i>	[ˈpɹæktɪst]	[ˈpɹæktɪst]	[ˈpɹæktɪst]
present	<i>present</i> (7)/ <i>prezænt</i> [sic]	[ˈpɹesɛnt]/[ˈpɹɛzɒnt] [sic]	[ˈpɹəsɛnt]	[ˈpɹɛzɛnt]
preserve	<i>prizɹv</i>	[pɹiˈzɛɹv]	[pɹiˈzɛɹv]	[pɹiˈzɛɹv] ~ [pɹəˈzɛɹv]
pronounce	<i>pronaʊns</i>	[pɹɔˈnɒns]	[pɹɔˈnɹʊnz]	[pɹəˈnaʊns]
pronouncing	<i>pronaʊnsɪŋ</i>	[pɹɔˈnɒnsɪŋ]	[pɹɔˈnɹʊnsɪŋ]	[pɹəˈnʊnsɪŋ]
pronunciation	<i>pronʏnsiɛfʏn</i> ² (3)	[pɹɔˈnɒnsiː(ː)ʃən]	[pɹɔˈnɹnsiː(ː)ʃən]	[pɹəˈnɒnsiːɛfən~ -ʃn]
proposed	<i>propozed</i> [sic]	[pɹɔˈpɔ(ː)zd]	[pɹɔˈpɔ(ː)zd]	[pɹəˈpouzɪd]
publish	<i>pʏbliʃ</i> ²	[ˈpʌblɪʃ] ~ [ˈpʌblɪʃ]	[ˈpɹɒblɪʃ]	[ˈpʌblɪʃ]
pure	<i>piur</i>	[piu(ː)ɹ]	[piu(ː)ɹ]	[piuɹ] ~ [pjəɹ]
question	<i>kuestʃʏn</i>	[kwestʃən]	[kwestʃən]	[ˈkwɛstʃən ~ ---tʃn]
rains	<i>reens</i>	[ɹɛːnʃ] [sic]	[ɹɛːnʃ]	[ɹɛmz]
rapidity	<i>rapiditi</i>	[ɹæˈpɪdɪti]	[ɹæˈpɪdɪtəi]	[ɹæˈpɪdɪti]
read	<i>red</i> (2) (<i>pp</i>)	[ɹɛd]	[ɹɛd]	[ɹɛd]
read	<i>riid</i> (3) (<i>inf</i>)	[ɹiːd]	[ɹɛːd]	[ɹiːd]
readers	<i>ridɹs</i>	[ˈɹi(ː)dɛɹʃ]	[ˈɹɛːdɛɹz]	[ˈɹiːdɛɹz]
rectifying	<i>rektɪfʏiŋ</i>	[ˈɹɛktɪfai-ɪŋ]	[ˈɹɛktɪfɹi-ɪŋ]	[ˈɹɛktɪˌfai-ɪŋ]
refines	<i>rɪfʏɪns</i>	[ɹiˈfaiɪnʃ]	[ɹiˈfɹɪnz]	[ɹiˈfamz]
reflects	<i>rɪflɛkts</i>	[ɹiˈflɛkts]	[ɹiˈflɛkts]	[ɹiˈflɛkts]
reformation	<i>refaʊrmɛʃʏn</i>	[ɹɛfɔɹˈmɛ(ː)ʃən]	[ɹɛfɔɹˈmɛ(ː)ʃən]	[ɹɛfəɹˈmeɪʃən ~ --ʃn]
relation	<i>rilɛʃʏn</i>	[ɹiˈlɛːʃən]	[ɹiˈlɛːʃən]	[ɹiˈleɪʃən]
religion	<i>rilɪdʒʏn</i>	[ɹiˈlɪdʒən]	[ɹiˈlɪdʒən]	[ɹiˈlɪdʒən]
rely	<i>rilʏi</i>	[ɹiˈlɑi]	[ɹiˈlɹi]	[ɹiˈlɑi]
Richmond	<i>Rɪtʃmʏnd</i> ¹	[ˈɹɪtʃmænd]	[ˈɹɪtʃmænd]	[ɹɪtʃmænd]
rides	<i>ɹɪdɪs</i>	[ɹaɪdʃ]	[ɹaɪdʃ]	[ɹaɪdʒ]
rising	<i>ɹɪzɪŋ</i>	[ˈɹaɪzɪŋ]	[ˈɹɹɪzɪŋ]	[ˈɹaɪzɪŋ]
roads	<i>rods</i>	[ɹɔ(ː)dʃ]	[ɹɒdʃ]	[ɹaʊdʒ]
rules	<i>ruls</i> (2)	[ɹu(ː)lʃ] [sic]	[ɹu(ː)lʃ]	[ɹuːlz]
runs	<i>ɹʏns</i>	[ɹʌnʃ] [sic]	[ɹɹnʃ]	[ɹʌnz]

Word list US spelling	BF ¹ and PS ² 's transcriptions	Franklin's London-based syllabic pronunciation	Franklin's Boston Paritary Register	General American
rushing	<i>ruʃɪŋ</i>	[ˈɹʌʃɪŋ]	[ˈɹʌʃɪŋ]	[ˈɹʌʃɪŋ]
same	<i>seem², sēm</i>	[sɛ:m]	[sɛ:m]	[seɪm]
satisfied	<i>satisfɪd</i>	[ˈsætɪs,fʌɪd]	[ˈsætɪs,fɹɪd]	[ˈsætɪsfʌɪd]
Saxon	<i>Saksɪn</i>	[ˈsæksən]	[ˈsæksən]	[ˈsæksən ~ 'sæksɪn]
second	<i>sekend</i>	[ˈsekend]	[ˈsekənd]	[ˈsekənd]
see	<i>sɪ²</i>	[si]	[si(:) ~ seɪ]	[si:]
send	<i>send¹</i>	[send]	[send]	[send]
sense	<i>sens¹</i>	[sens]	[sens]	[sens]
sent	<i>sent¹</i>	[sent]	[sent]	[sent]
sentence	<i>sentens (2)</i>	[ˈsentens]	[ˈsentəns]	[ˈsentəns]
sentences	<i>sentensez</i>	[ˈsentensez]	[ˈsentənsəz]	[ˈsentənsɪz]
September	<i>septembɜr²</i>	[sepˈtɛmbəɹ]	[sepˈtɛmbəɹ]	[sepˈtɛmbəɹ]
serene	<i>siriin</i>	[siˈri:n]	[seˈɹi:n ~ seˈɹɛ:n]	[səˈri:n]
servant	<i>sɜrvant</i>	[ˈsəɹvənt]	[ˈseɹvənt]	[ˈsəɹvənt]
service	<i>sɜrvis²</i>	[ˈsəɹvɪs]	[ˈseɹvɪs]	[ˈsəɹvɪs]
several	<i>several</i>	[ˈsevəɹəl]	[ˈsevəɹəl]	[ˈsevɹəl]
shakes	<i>feeks</i>	[ˈfe:ks]	[ˈfe:ks]	[ˈfeɪks]
she	<i>fɪ¹</i>	[fi]	[feɪ]	[fi:]
shines	<i>fɪɪns</i>	[ˈʃaɪnʃ]	[ˈʃɹɪnz]	[ˈʃaɪnz]
short	<i>ʃaɜrt² (2)</i>	[ˈʃɔ:ɹt]	[ˈʃɔ:ɹt]	[ˈʃɔ:ɹt ~ ʃɔ:ɹt]
should	<i>ʃuld</i>	[ʃuld]	[ʃuld]	[ʃʊd]
shows	<i>ʃoz</i>	[ˈʃɔ(:)z]	[ˈʃɔ(:)z ~ ʃɹuz]	[ˈʃouz]
signified	<i>signɪfɪd</i>	[ˈsɪgnɪ,fʌɪd]	[ˈsɪgnɪ,fɹɪd]	[ˈsɪgnɪfʌɪd]
similar	<i>similar (4)</i>	[ˈsɪmɪləɹ]	[ˈsɪmɪləɹ]	[ˈsɪmɪləɹ]
sir	<i>sɜr²</i>	[sʌɹ]	[sʌɹ ~ səɹ]	[səɹ]
slight	<i>slɪɪt¹</i>	[slʌɪt]	[slɹɪt]	[slʌɪt]
so	<i>so (6)</i>	[sɔ(:)]	[sɹu]	[sou]
some	<i>sɪm (2)</i>	[sʌm]	[sɹɪm]	[sʌm ~ səm]
sooner	<i>sune(y)r¹ [sic]</i>	[ˈsu(:)nəɹ]	[ˈsɹnəɹ]	[ˈsu:nəɹ]
sound	<i>səʊnd² (4)</i>	[səʊnd]	[sɹʊnd]	[saʊnd]
sounds	<i>səʊnds (4) səʊnds</i>	[səʊndʃ]	[sɹʊndz]	[saʊndz]

Word list US spelling	BF ¹ and PS ² 's transcriptions	Franklin's London-based syllabic pronunciation	Franklin's Boston Paritary Register	General American
speaker	<i>spikʏr</i>	[ˈspi(:)kə.ɪ]	[ˈspɛ:kəɪ]	[ˈspi:kəɪ]
spell	<i>spel</i> (4)	[spel]	[spel]	[spɛt]
spelling	<i>speliŋ</i> (8)	[ˈspeliŋ]	[ˈspeliŋ]	[ˈspeliŋ]
spoke	<i>spok</i>	[spɔ(:)k]	[spɔ(:)k] ~ [sprɔk]?	[spouk]
stains	<i>steens</i>	[stɛ:nʃ] [sic]	[stɛ:nz]	[stɛnz]
stand	<i>stand</i> ¹	[stænd]	[stænd]	[stænd]
still	<i>stil</i> (2)	[stɪl]	[stɪl]	[stɪɫ]
stood	<i>stud</i>	[stud]	[strɪd]	[stʊd]
storm	<i>staɔrm</i>	[stɔ.ɪm]	[stɔ.ɪm]	[stɔ.ɪm ~ stɔɪm]
stream	<i>striim</i>	[stɪ.ɪ:m]	[stre:m]	[stɪ.ɪ:m]
such	<i>sʏtʃ</i> (5)	[sʌtʃ]	[sɜtʃ ~ sɛtʃ]	[sʌtʃ]
sufficient	<i>sʏfɪʃnt</i>	[səˈfɪʃɛnt]	[sɜˈfɪʃɛnt]	[səˈfɪʃˈnt]
surmounted	<i>sʏrˈmaʊntɛd</i> (2)	[sə.ɪˈmaʊntɛd]	[sə.ɪˈmaʊntɛd]	[sə.ɪˈmaʊntɪd]
suspect (vb.)	<i>sʏspekt</i> ¹	[səˈspekt]	[səˈspekt]	[səˈspekt]
teaching	<i>tɪtʃɪŋ</i> (2)	[ˈti(:)tʃɪŋ]	[ˈtɛ:tʃɪŋ]	[ˈti:tʃɪŋ]
telling	<i>telɪŋ</i>	[ˈtelɪŋ]	[ˈtelɪŋ]	[ˈtelɪŋ]
tempests	<i>tempests</i>	[ˈtempests]	[ˈtempɛsts]	[ˈtempɛsts]
than	<i>ðan</i> (4)	[ðæn]	[ðæn ~ ðən]	[ðæn ~ ðən]
that ²	<i>ðat</i> (17)	[ðæt]	[ðæt]	[ðæt ~ ðət]
the ²	<i>ði</i> (72)	[ði]	[ðə]	[ði: ~ ðə]
there	<i>ðeer</i> (2) <i>ðer</i> (5), <i>ðɛr</i> , <i>ðær</i>	[ðɛ:ɪ ~ ðæ:ɪ]	[ðɛ:ɪ ~ ðæ:ɪ]	[ðɛ.ɪ]
them	<i>ðem</i> (5)	[ðɛm]	[ðɛm]	[ðɛm ~ ðəm]
then	<i>ðen</i> (1)	[ðɛn]	[ðɛn]	[ðɛn ~ ðən]
this	<i>ðis</i> (3)	[ðɪs]	[ðɪs]	[ðɪs]
these	<i>ðiz</i> (2)	[ði(:)z]	[ði(:)z ~ ðɛ:z]	[ði:z]
they	<i>ðee</i> ¹ (2) / <i>ðê</i> (3) / <i>ðe</i> (5)	[ðɛ:]	[ðɛ:]	[ðeɪ]
things	<i>θɪŋs</i> ¹ (2) [sic] <i>θɪŋs</i>	[θɪŋʃ]	[θɪŋz]	[θɪŋz ~ θɪŋʃ]
think	<i>θɪnk</i> ² (3)	[θɪŋk]	[θɪŋk]	[θɪŋk]
third	<i>θɪrd</i>	[θəɪd]	[θəɪd] ~ [θɛɪd]	[θəɪd]
those	<i>ðoz</i> ² (2)	[ðɔ(:)z]	[ðɔ(:)z]	[ðouz]

Word list US spelling	BF ¹ and PS ² 's transcriptions	Franklin's London-based syllabic pronunciation	Franklin's Boston Paritary Register	General American
though	ðo (2)	[ðɔ(:)]	[ðɹu]	[ðoo]
thousands	θaauzands (2)	['θuuzænds]	['θɹuzəndz]	['θauzəndz]
through	θru ¹ (2)	[θru(:)]	[θru(:)]	[θru:]
till	til	[tɪl]	[tɪl]	[tɪɫ]
time	tɪim (3)	[tɪim]	[tɹim]	[taim]
to	to (32), tu ² (8)	[tɔ(:) ~ tu(:)]	[tɔ(:)]	[tu:]
torrents	taərents	['tɔɹɛnts]	['tɔɹɛnts]	['tɔɹənts ~ tɔɹənt]
transcribed ²	transkrɪbd	[ˌtrænˈskɹɪbd]	[ˌtrænˈskɹɪbd]	[ˌtrænˈskɹɪbd]
true	tru (3)	[tru(:)]	[tru(:)]	[tru:]
uncertain	ɯnsɹten	[ʌnˈsəɹtɛn]	[ənˈsɛɹtən]	[ənˈsəɹtən]
under	ɯndɹ	['ʌndəɹ]	['ɹndəɹ]	['ʌndəɹ]
underplowman	ɯndɹpləʊman	['ʌndəɹˌpləʊmæn]	['ɹndəɹˌɹuman]	['ʌndəɹˌplaʊmən]
understood	ɯndɹstud	[ʌndəɹˈstud]	[ɹndəɹˈstud]	[ʌndəɹˈstud]
unlearned	ɯnlarn'd	[ʌnˈlæɹnd]	[ɹnˈlæɹnd]	[ənˈləɹnd]
unless ²	ɯnles	[ʌnˈles]	[ɹnˈles]	[ənˈles]
us	ɯs	[ʌs]	[ɹs]	[ʌs]
use (n.) ²	ius (2)	[ius]	[ius]	[jus]
use (vb.)	iuz	[iuz]	[iu(:)z]	[ju:z]
usage	iusedʒ	[ˈiuˌsedʒ]	[ˈiʊsədʒ]	[ˈjusɪdʒ]
used	iuzed [sic]	[iuzd]	[iu(:)zd] [sic]	[ju:zd]
useless	iusles ²	[ˈiʊslɛs]	[ˈiʊsləs]	[ˈjuːslɪs]
using	iuzɪŋ	[ˈiuzɪŋ]	[ˈiu(:)zɪŋ]	[ˈju:zɪŋ]
varies	veriz	[ˈvɛɹɪz]	[ˈvɛɹɪz]	[ˈvɛɹɪz ~ ˈvɛɹɪz]
very	veri	[ˈvɛɹɪ]	[ˈvɛɹɪ]	[ˈvɛɹɪ]
village	viledʒ	[ˈvɪlɛdʒ]	[ˈvɪlɪdʒ]	[ˈvɪlɪdʒ]
villain	vilen	[ˈvɪlɛn]	[ˈvɪlən]	[ˈvɪlən ~ ˈvɪɫŋ]
way	ue ² (2)	[ue(:)]	[ue(:)]	[weɪ]
we	ui ² (12)	[ui(:)]	[ui(:) ~ ueɪ]	[wi:]
weariness	uirines ¹	[ˈui(:)ɹɪnɛs]	[ˈuɛɹɪnəs]	[ˈwi:ɹɪnɪs]
weeks	uiiks	[ui:ks]	[ui:ks]	[wi:ks]
well ²	uel (5)	[uel]	[wel]	[wɛɫ]
what	huat	[huæt]	[huæt ~ huɹt]	[(h)wʌt]

Word list US spelling	BF ¹ and PS ² 's transcriptions	Franklin's London-based syllabic pronunciation	Franklin's Boston Paritary Register	General American
whatever	<i>huatever</i>	[huæ'tevəɪ]	[huæ'tevəɪ]	[(h)wʌ'tevəɪ]
wheel	<i>huil</i>	[hui:l]	[hui:l]	[(h)wi:l]
when	<i>huen</i> (5)	[huen]	[huen]	[(h)wen]
whether	<i>hueðyr</i> (3), <i>hueðer</i> [sic]	[ˈhueðəɪ]	[ˈhueðəɪ]	[ˈ(h)weðəɪ]
which	<i>huitf</i> ² (4)	[hurtʃ]	[hurtʃ]	[(h)wɪtʃ]
while	<i>huqil</i>	[huail]	[huɪl]	[(h)waɪl]
whirlwind	<i>huqrulind</i>	[ˈhuərlumd]	[ˈhuərlumd]	[ˈ(h)wəɪlwind]
who	<i>hu</i> ² (3)	[hu(:)]	[hu(:)]	[hu:]
whole	<i>huol</i>	[huo(:)l] (hypercorrection)	[hʏl]	[houɫ]
will	<i>uīl</i> (10)	[uɪl]	[uɪl]	[wɪɫ]
wish	<i>uif</i> ² (3)	[uɪʃ]	[uɪʃ]	[wɪʃ]
with	<i>uið</i> (8)	[uɪð]	[uɪð]	[wɪθ ~ wɪð]
without	<i>uiðæut</i>	[uɪ'ðəut]	[uɪ'ðɹut]	[wɪ'ðəut]
word	<i>uqrd</i> (2)	[uəɹd]	[uɒɹd]	[wəɹd]
words	<i>uqrd</i> ¹⁺² (13)	[uəɹdʒ]	[uɒɹdʒ]	[wəɹdʒ]
works	<i>uqrks</i> (1)	[uəɹks]	[uɒɹks]	[wəɹks]
worse	<i>uīurs</i> ¹ / <i>uurs</i> ¹ [sic]	[uəɹs]	[uɒɹs]	[wəɹs]
would	<i>uld</i> (3) / <i>uuld</i> ² (16)	[uld]	[uld]	[wud]
wretched	<i>retfed</i> ¹	[ˈɹɛtʃɛd]	[ˈɹɛtʃɛd]	[ˈɹɛtʃɪd]
write	<i>rqit</i>	[ɹait]	[ɹɪt]	[ɹaɪt]
writers	<i>rqiters</i> ²	[ˈɹaitəɹz]	[ˈɹɪtəɹz]	[ˈɹaɪtəɹz]
writing	<i>rqitiŋ</i> (9)	[ˈɹɪtiŋ]	[ˈɹɪtiŋ]	[ˈɹaɪtiŋ]
written	<i>riten</i> (4)	[ˈɹɪtɛn]	[ˈɹɪtən]	[ˈɹɪtən ~ ˈɹɪtn]
wrote	<i>rot</i>	[ɹo(:)t]	[ɹo(:)t]	[ɹout]
you	<i>iu</i> (8)	[iu(:)]	[iu(:)]	[ju:]
your	<i>iur</i> ² (6)	[iu(:)ɹ]	[iu(:)ɹ]	[jɔɹ ~ jəɹ ~ jəɪ]
yours	<i>iurz</i> (2)	[iu(:)ɹz]	[iu(:)ɹz]	[jɔɹz ~ jəɹz ~ jəɪz]

Total: 442 words

Appendix 4:

Epistolary Exchanges between Benjamin Franklin and Noah Webster (1786-1789)

Herein the reader will find the epistolary exchanges between Noah Webster and Benjamin Franklin, four letters from Webster and three from Franklin. All of Franklin's letters have been published and are reproduced here thanks to Internet Archives and Founders Online. Webster's four unpublished appear thanks to the Digital Edition by The Packard Humanities Institute who have made these precious documents available to the public under the title of "The Papers of Benjamin Franklin," sponsored by The American Philosophical Society and Yale University.¹ This is the first time Webster's letters have ever been published (cf. Chapter 29 for my interpretations).

The letters are present chronologically. For the first time, the reader can now peruse these letters in sequence.

From Noah Webster, Jr. (unpublished)
New York May 24 1786

Sir.

When I was in Philadelphia, I had the honor of hearing your Excellency's opinion upon the idea of reforming the English Alphabet. I had repeatedly revolved, in my mind, the utility of such a plan and had arranged some ideas upon the subject; but had not ventured to hope for success in an undertaking of this kind. Your Excellency's sentiments upon the subject, backed by the concurring opinion of many respectable Gentlemen, and particularly of the late Chairman of Congress, have taught me to believe the Reformation of our Alphabet still practicable. I know that several

1 See <https://franklinpapers.org/framedVolumes.jsp>. May 24, 1786, June 18, 1786, October 28, 1786, May 20, 1789.

attempts to effect it in England have proved fruitless; but I conceive they failed through some defect in the plans proposed; or for reasons which do not exist in this country.

Enclosed is a plan for this purpose of reducing the orthography of the Language to perfect regularity, with as few new characters and alterations of the old ones, as possible. It is probable that a great number of new and unusual characters would defeat the attempt.²

I know not whether your Excellency will be able to understand the characters fully; for it is very difficult to convey sounds on paper, and particularly for me who am no penman and cannot form the characters exactly as I wish. But this rough draught will perhaps give a sufficient idea of my plan and it is submitted to your Excellency for adoption, amendment or rejection. I am requested to lay the plan before Your Excellency and by a Gentleman whose character in public life, and particularly in the chair of Congress, will give his opinion great weight in this country. Should this or any other plan be adopted, it is desired that Your Excellency would lay it before Congress for their critical consideration. The advantages of adopting a reformation in their country, whether political or literary will readily occur to an attentive mind, and it would be arrogant and superfluous for me to state them to one, who is so accurately acquainted with the elements of language and the interests of America as your Excellency. General Washington has expressed the warmest wishes for the success of my undertaking to refine the language, and could he be acquainted with the New Alphabet proposed would undoubtedly commence its advocate. A few distinguished characters might give such weight to an attempt of this magnitude, as to crush all the opposition that would be made by the enemies of our Independence.

The minds of people are in a ferment and consequently disposed to receive improvements, once let the ferment subside and the succeeding lethargy will bar every great and amendment. The favorable reception my Lectures have generally met with encourage me to hope that most of the Americans may be detached from an implicit adherence to the language and the manners of the British nation. I have the honor to be with the highest respect Your Excellency's most obedient most humble Servant

Noah Webster jun
His Excellency Benjamin Franklin Esquire

2 At this point, I am not certain Webster's plan has survived.

ps It would be esteemed a singular favor, if your Excellency would publicly recommend the Institute. It would facilitate its introduction and confer a peculaor obligation on me. I must also beg permission to inscribe my Lectures to Your Excellency, when I publish them, as it is probably I may do within a few months.

Noah Webster jun

Addressed: His Excellency Benjamin Franklin Esq / Philadelphia

Endorsed: Noah Webster Esq

To Noah Webster

Philada. June 18. 1786.

Sir,

I received the Letter you did me the honour of writing to me the 24th past, with the Scheme enclos'd of your reform'd Alphabet. I think the Reformation not only necessary but practicable. But have so much to say to you on the Subject, that I wish to see and confer with you upon it, as that would save much Time and Writing, Sounds, till such an Alphabet is fix'd, not being easily explain'd or discours'd of clearly upon Paper; I have formerly consider'd this Matter pretty fully, and contriv'd some of the means of carrying it into Execution, so as gradually to render the Reformation general. Our Ideas are so nearly similar, that I make no doubt of our easily agreeing on the Plan, and you may depend on the best Support I may be able to give it as a Part of your Institute, of which I wish you would bring with you a compleat Copy, having as yet seen only a part of it: I shall then be better able to recommend it as you desire. Hoping to have soon the Pleasure of seeing you, I do not enlarge, but am, with sincere Esteem, Sir, Your most obedient and most humble servant.

B Franklin

Addressed: To / Mr Noah Webster, Jun. / at / New Haven / or / Hartford / forwd.

Endorsed: New York June 20th. 1786 forwarded by your friend and Humble servant.

P. Wetmore

Dr Franklin June 18 1786 on reformation of Alphabet

From Noah Webster, Jr. (unpublished)

New Haven Jun 23 1786

Sir.

The letter which Your Excellency has done me the honor to address to me at New York, was yesterday recieved at this Place.

I am happy that a plan of reforming our Alphabet is so well recieved by a Gentleman, who throroughly understands the subject, and am more and more convinced, from the present sentiments and spirit of the Americans, that a judicious attempt to introduce it needs but the support of a few eminent characters to be carried into effect.

I feel the necessity of conferring with your Excellency on the subject and would do myself the honor of waiting on you immediately, had I not made arrangements or rather engagements to read Lectures in Boston and Portsmouth this summer. Every circumstances with me renders this the most eligible plan; for the Lectures have their effect in preparing the minds of people for any improvements, and my business will require me to be at Philadelphia in Sept or october. If this would answer your Excellency's wishes, it would be more convenient for me; otherwise I will come to Philad. immediately. I shall be in New Haven about ten days and then propose to proceed to Boston, unless I have further information. I have the honor to be, Your Excellency's much obliged and most obedient Servant

Noah Webster jun

His Excellency Benjamin Franklin Esq

Addressed: His Excellency Benjamin Franklin Esq / Philadelphia

Endorsed: Noah Webster Esq

To Noah Webster (unpublished)

Philada. July 9, 1786

Sir,

I received your Favour of the 23d past. I think with you that your Lecturing on the Language will be of great Use in preparing the Minds of People for the Improvements proposed, and therefore would not advise your omitting any of the Engagements you have made, for the sake of being here sooner than your Business requires, that is in September or October next. I shall then be glad to see and confer with you on the Subject; being

with great Esteem, Sir, Your most obedient and most humble servant.

Noah Webster, Esqr

Addressed: To / Noah Webster, Esqr / at / New Haven / per favor of / Mr Goreham / of Boston / Free N. Gorham

Endorsed: Dr Franklin July 9th 1786 forwd. by P. W. N Haven fowdd by
[In Noah Webster's hand:] Autograph sent to Dr Sprague to England

From Noah Webster, Jr. (unpublished)

Hartford Octr 28th 1786

Sir,

Yesterday I arrived in Hartford after a Lecturing tour thro' the eastern States, in which my success has equalled my expectations.

The time is expired, that I proposed for my journey to Philadelphia; and altho' I am determined not to be disappointed, by common accidents, yet I labor under some embarrassments which I take the liberty to mention to your Excellency. The profits on the sale of my books which amount now to about £100 per annum are all appropriated to reimburse the expenses I have incurred in prosecuting my designs; so that I cannot with propriety expect any assistance from them for the coming year. My Lectures which have supported me hitherto are closed and I have nothing to depend on for subsistence this year, but my further exertions in some business. I can hardly bear my expenses to Philada, much less can I support myself there without some business which is not ascertained.

Possibly a subscription may be obtained for a repetition of my Lectures in Philada. I have thought of instituting an oratorical academy in that City or New York or to open public reading after the plan of Mr. Sheridan in London. I was asked when in Philada by President Ewing, whether I would accept the professorship of Oratory in the University. This I could not do then and I do not know whether I should now be willing. I know not the emoluments of it nor indeed the business. If it requires the attention of a man, like a school, as I suspect from a little acquaintance with Mr. Gamble the late professor, I should not, I could not take it. If the consists in reading Lectures at stated times or in hearing the lessons of a class, as the instructors practise in New Haven or Cambridge, it is probable I should be glad of the place.

I shall wait here a few days for your Excellency's answer, if an answer will not be too great a trouble; for in my present situation I know not how to act.

I wish for business, it is my life, my pleasure as well as my support. But I began a vast design without a shilling, and I know the world too well to ask pecuniary assistance from any person. I want none I will take none, but what I earn. I wish, if possible to have business, which will afford me some liesure for my Lectures must be prepared for the press as soon as possible, and my Institute stands in need of improvement.

If your Excellency can furnish me with any prospects, in either of the ways mentioned, or in any other, it would be a satisfaction to me and enable me to make some arrangements here as will be necessary, if I leave the State. I have the honor to be with perfect respect

Your Excellency's most obliged and very humble Servant
Noah Webster

His Excellency Benjamin Franklin Esq

Addressed: His Excellency / Benjamin Franklin Esq / Philadelphia

Endorsed: Mr Noah Webster

From Noah Webster, Jr. (unpublished)
Hartford, (where I shall reside) May 20th 1789

Sir.

Enclosed, by request, is a letter from the Revd. Abiel Holmes of Midway in Georgia, a young Gentleman of peculiar modesty and great merit, whom I beg leave to introduce to your corresponding acquaintance. The request he makes is such as your Excellency will be pleased to comply with, if not too troublesome, as Mr. Holmes is in a situation where he is capable of being extensively useful.

I have at length printed my Dissertations on the Language, a copy of which I shall desire my bookseller in Phild. to deliver to your Excellency, as soon as they arrive.

With ardent wishes for the life and health of so valuable a character, I am your Excellency's most oblig'd and most obedient Servant

Noah Webster

His Excellency Benjamin Franklin Esq

Addressed: His Excellency / Benjamin Franklin Esq / Philadelphia

Endorsed: Noah Webster

To Noah Webster, Jr. (unpublished)
Philada. Decr. 26th 1789.

Dear Sir,

I received some Time since your Dissertations on the English Language. (The Book was not accompanied by any Letter or Message, informing me to whom I am obliged for it; but I suppose it is to yourself.) It is an excellent Work, and will be greatly useful in turning the Thoughts of our Countrymen to correct Writing. Please to accept my Thanks for it, as well as for the great Honor you have done me, in its Dedication. I ought to have made this Acknowledgment sooner, but much Indisposition prevented me.

I cannot but applaud your Zeal for preserving the Purity of our Language, both in its Expressions and Pronunciation, and in correcting the popular Errors, several of our States are continually falling into with respect to both. Give me leave to mention some of them, tho' possibly they may already have occur'd to you. I wish however that in some future Publication of your's, you would set a discountenancing Mark upon them. The first I remember is the Word *improved*. When I left New England in the Year 23, this Word had never been used among us, as far as I know, but in the Sense of ameliorated or made better, except once in a very old Book of Dr. Mather's entitled *Remarkable Providences*. As that eminent Man wrote a very obscure Hand, I remember that when I read that Word in his Book, used instead of the Word *employed*, I conjectured that it was an Error of the Printer, who had mistaken a too short l in the Writing for an r, and a y with too short a Tail for a v, whereby *employed* was converted into *improved*; but when I returned to Boston in 1733, I found this Change had obtained Favor, and was then become common; for I met with it often in perusing the Newspapers, where it frequently made an Appearance rather ridiculous: Such, for Instance, as the Advertisement of a Country House to be sold, which had been many Years *improved* as a Tavern; and in the Character of a deceased Country-Gentleman, that he had been, for more than 30 Years, *improved* as a Justice-of-Peace. This Use of the Word *improve* is peculiar to New-England, and not to be met with among any other Speakers of English, either on this or the other Side of the Water.

During my late Absence in France I find that several other new Words have been introduced into our parliamentary Language; for Example, I find a Verb formed from the Substantive *Notice*, *I should not have noticed this*, were it not that the Gentleman &c. Also another Verb, from the Substantive, *Advocate*, *The Gentleman who advocates*, or *who has advocated that Motion*, &c. Another from the Substantive *Progress*, the most awkward

and abominable of the three, *The Committee* having progressed resolved to adjourn. The Word *opposed*, tho' not a new Word, I find used in a new Manner, as, *The Gentlemen who are opposed to this Measure*, to which I have *also myself always been Opposed*. If you should happen to be of my Opinion with respect to these Innovations you will use your Authority in reprobating them.

The Latin Language, long the Vehicle used in distributing Knowledge among the different Nations of Europe, is daily more and more neglected; and one of the modern Tongues, viz the French, seems in Point of Universality to have supplied its Place; it is spoken in all the Courts of Europe, and most of the Literati, those even who do not speak it, have acquired Knowledge enough of it, to enable them easily to read the Books that are written in it. This gives a considerable Advantage to that Nation; it enables its Authors to inculcate and spread thro' other Nations such Sentiments and Opinions on important Points as are most conducive to its Interests, or which may contribute to its Reputation, by promoting the common Interests of Mankind. It is perhaps owing to its being written in French, that Voltaire's *Treatise on Toleration*, has had so sudden and so great an Effect on the Bigotry of Europe, as almost entirely to disarm it. The general Use of the French Language has likewise a very advantageous Effect on the Profits of the Bookselling Branch of Commerce, it being well known that the more Copies can be sold that are struck off from one Composition of Types, the Profits encrease in a much greater Proportion than they do in making a greater Number of Pieces in any other kind of Manufacture. And at present there is no Capital Town in Europe without a French Bookseller's Shop corresponding with Paris. Our English bids fair to obtain the second Place. The great Body of excellent printed Sermons in our Language, and the Freedom of our Writings on political Subjects, have induced a Number of Divines of different Sects and Nations, as well as Gentlemen concerned in public Affairs, to study it, so far at least as to read it. And if we were to endeavour the facilitating its Progress, the Study of our Tongue might become much more general. Those who have employed some Part of their Time in learning a new Language must have frequently observed, that while their Acquaintance with it was imperfect, Difficulties, small in themselves, operated as great ones in obstructing their Progress. A Book, for Example, ill printed, or a Pronunciation, in speaking, not well articulated, would render a Sentence unintelligible, which from a clear Print, or a distinct Speaker, would have been immediately comprehended. If therefore we would have the Benefit of seeing our Language more generally known among Mankind, we should endeavour to remove all

the Difficulties, however small, that discourage the learning it. But I am sorry to observe, that, of late Years, those Difficulties, instead of being diminished, have been augmented. In examining the English Books that were printed between the Restoration and the Recession of George the 2d, we may observe, that all Substantives were begun with a Capital, in which we imitated our Mother Tongue, the German. This was more particularly useful to those who were not well acquainted with the English, there being such a prodigious Number of our Words, that are both Verbs and Substantives, and spelt in the same Manner, tho' often accented differently in Pronunciation. This Method has, by the Fancy of Printers, of late Years, been laid aside; from an Idea, that suppressing the Capitals shews the Character to greater Advantage; those Letters, prominent above the Line, disturbing its even, regular Appearance. The Effect of this Change is so considerable that a learned Man of France, who used to read over Books, tho' not perfectly acquainted with our Language, in Conversation with me on the Subject of our Authors, attributed the greater Obscurity he found in our modern Books, compared with those of the Period abovementioned, to a Change of Style, for the worse, in our Writers; of which Mistake I convinced him by marking for him each Substantive with a Capital, in a Paragraph, which he then easily understood, tho' before he could not comprehend it. This shews the Inconvenience of that pretended Improvement. [*different hand: division*]

From the same Fondness for an even and uniform Appearance of Characters in the Line the Printers have of late banished also the Italic Types, in which Words of Importance to be attended to in the Sense of the Sentence, and Words on which an Emphasis should be put in Reading, used to be printed. And lately another Fancy has induced some Printers to use the short round s instead of the long one, which formerly served well to distinguish a Word readily by its varied Appearance. Certainly the omitting this prominent Letter makes the Line appear more even; but renders it less immediately legible; as the paring all Men's Noses might smoothe and level their Faces, but would render their Physiognomies less distinguishable. Add to all these Improvements backward, another modern Fancy, that *grey* Printing is more beautiful than *black*; hence the English new Books are printed in so dim a Character as to be read with Difficulty by old Eyes, unless in a very strong Light and with good Glasses. Whoever compares a Volume of the Gentleman's Magazine printed between the Year 1731 and 1740 with one of those printed in the last 10 Years, will be convinced of the much greater Degree of Perspicuity given by black Ink than by grey. Lord Chesterfield pleasantly remarked this

Difference to Faulkener, the Printer of the Dublin Journal, who was vainly making Encomiums on his own Paper, as the most complete of any in the World, “but, Mr. Faulkener,” says My Lord, “don’t you think it might be still farther improved, by using Paper and Ink not quite so near of a Colour.” For all these Reasons I cannot but wish that our American Printers would in their Editions avoid these fancied Improvements, and thereby render their Works more agreeable to Foreigners in Europe, to the great Advantage of our Bookselling Commerce.

Farther to be more sensible of the Advantage of clear and distinct Printing, let us consider the Assistance it affords in Reading well aloud to an Auditory. In so doing the Eye generally slides forward three or four Words before the Voice. If the Sight clearly distinguishes what the coming Words are, it gives time to order the Modulation of the Voice to express them properly. But if they are obscurely printed, or disguised by omitting the Capitals and long s’s, or otherwise, the Reader is apt to modulate wrong, and finding he has done so, he is obliged to go back and begin the Sentence again; which lessens the Pleasure of the Hearers. This leads me to mention an old Error in our Mode of Printing. We are sensible that when a Question is met with in Reading, there is a proper Variation to be used in the Management of the Voice. We have therefore a Point, called an Interrogation, affix’d to the Question in order to distinguish it. But this is absurdly placed at its End, so that the Reader does not discover it, ’till he finds he has wrongly modulated his Voice and is therefore obliged to begin again the Sentence. To prevent this the Spanish Printers, more sensibly, place an Interrogation at the Beginning as well as at the End of a Question. We have another Error of the same kind in printing Plays, where Something often occurs that is marked as spoken *aside*. But the Word *aside* is placed at the End of the Speech when it ought to precede it, as a Direction to the Reader that he may govern his Voice accordingly. The Practice of our Ladies in meeting five or six together to form little busy Parties, when each is employed in some useful Work; while one reads to them, is so commendable in itself, that it deserves the Attention of Authors and Printers to make it as pleasing as possible, both to the Reader and Hearers.

After these general Observations permit me to make one that I imagine may regard your Interest. It is that your Spelling-Book is miserably printed here, so as in many Places to be scarcely legible, and on wretched Paper. If this is not attended to, and the new one Lately advertised as coming out should be preferable in those Respects, it may hurt the future Sale of your’s.

I congratulate you on your Marriage of which the Newspapers inform me. My best Wishes attend you, being, with sincere Esteem Sir, Your most obedient and most humble Servant

B Franklin

Addressed: Noah Webster Junr Esqr / Hartford / [*Crossed out:* Boston] Favd by Capt. Rich

Notation: Recd and forwarded by Your affectionate Father Wm. Greenleaf Boston April 11 '90 Honord by Mr Slover

Endorsed: Dr Franklin. Philad. December 26. 1789

Glossary of Linguistic and Sociolinguistic Terminology

Introduction

As an introduction to this glossary, it is useful to clarify what is meant in this book by the term **language**, and equally what is not intended by it. Because the question is complex and contested, I have not treated it as a separate entry but instead address it here as a preliminary discussion. This clarification is particularly important because the issue lies at the heart of the approach adopted in the present study of Benjamin Franklin's idealized vision of English.

Oddly, no universally accepted definition of *language* exists. Even institutions such as UNESCO have avoided proposing an official definition. This partly explains why their estimates of the number of languages in the world vary widely, ranging between about 6,000 and 7,500 depending on the method of classification adopted.

Because they are often oriented towards theoretical linguistics of one school or other, standard reference works do not contribute to a deeper understanding of the nature of "language," at least for our purposes. For example, *The Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics* (Matthew, 1997) distinguishes between levels of language: "1. A language in the ordinary sense: e.g. English or Japanese, Opp. Dialect, also as in ordinary usage. 2. The phenomenon of vocal and written communication among human beings generally, again in ordinary usage. Thus, the subject-matter of linguistics includes both language as a general property of our species (sense 2) and particular languages (sense 1)."

Another example is R. L. Trask's *A Dictionary of Grammatical Terms in Linguistics* in which he distinguishes between "natural languages" and "formal languages" (i.e. theoretical or constructed systems) (Trask, 1996, 178). His definition of natural language is most pertinent for our purposes: "Any language which is, or once was, the mother tongue of a group of human beings 2. By extension, any conceivable language which is consistent with the requirement of the theory of grammar, and which might in principle be such a mother tongue." This definition raises an obvious difficulty – the reasoning is circular.

What constitutes a *mother tongue*? *Language* derives ultimately from French *langage*, the root of which is *langue*, also meaning “tongue,” so that “mother tongue” (*langue maternelle*) simply restates the original concept rather than clarifying it. Such definitions are therefore too imprecise for the purposes of the present study.

In agreement with Shorrocks (1998), with whom I discussed this issue in 1998¹ and again in 2000, I believe it is more productive to begin by considering the speech of the individual speaker, the **idiolect**, rather than advancing abstract definitions. Although it is viewed in a different theoretical context, this view is also shared by Antoine Culioli (1999) in the framework of his *Théorie des opérations énonciatives* which is founded on what he calls a “speaker-centered approach.”

The **idiolect** is thus a personal linguistic system comprised of a unique mix of phonological, grammatical, syntactic, and lexical components. Every speaker’s idiolect is shaped not only by the person’s culture, which conditions their world view, but also by the range of social **institutions** in which they interact with others. Invariably, some of the institutions are **paritary** and egalitarian, while others are more **disparitary** and hierarchical. The bottom line is that speakers interacting within the same institutions develop similar idiolects. Having said that, it is vital to point out that no two idiolects are ever identical, not even within a single family.

Seen from another perspective, Lesley Milroy (1980, 1982) has shown that speakers sharing similar social environments and idiolects tend to gather in social groupings or **clusters**, which are embedded within larger social **networks** both of which coalesce into distinct **speech communities**. This contributes to the development of common codes of linguistic evaluation, a process which can be better understood when taking into account Giles’ CAT (Communication Accommodation Theory).² Labov’s concepts of **covert** and **overt prestige** also fit in nicely here.

When Noam Chomsky discussed native speaker “intuitions” regarding grammatical “well-formedness,” he was no doubt thinking of individuals within a specific speech community composed of GA/Standard American English speakers (Chomsky, 1965). The problem with his approach is the narrowness of this vision. Intuitions about grammatical appropriateness are only applicable when the individual is evaluating members of his own speech community who share the same codes of evaluation. When one takes into the consideration the entire spectrum of registers and varieties of a given “language,” this is where one runs into trouble. What would have been the “intuition” of the phonetician

1 I wish to stress to the reader that I am certainly not implying that I had any influence on Graham Shorrocks’ definition of language. When we met, we were simply struck by the similarity of our views (cf. Shorrocks, 1998, 31-46).

2 This is my interpretation of their concepts.

Daniel Jones, a professor at the University College of London during the first half of the 20th century, upon hearing a Lancashire barber who told him ['kɛ:ɪ ðɪ 'dɛ:n ən əl 'pau ðɪ 'jæ:ɪ], literally, “Cower thee down (i.e. sit down), and I’ll pow (cut) thy hair”?³ This particular dialect speech was very much alive before the Second World War. Would Jones have even understood him? As social interaction expands across social institutions, linguistic variation increases, especially as one descends the social ladder (cf. **basilects/badumes** below).

A **dialect** (or **variety**, see below for more discussion) may be understood to be a broad set of closely related idiolects spoken in an array of institutions (each with a range of **registers** of their own) that encompass both a vertical social axis and a horizontal geographical axis. In both cases, languages, like dialects, are structured along **continua** rather than being separated by sharply marked linguistic borders or frontiers. This explains why it is difficult to determine where one begins and the other ends.

This perspective also explains the analogy I drew in the Front Matter between language and pointillism. Each individual idiolect may be compared to a single point in a much larger painting that is composed of hundreds, thousands, or even millions of points, each having a slightly different shade of colour. When viewed up close, the painting appears as a confusing multitude of discrete, disconnected dots whereas, when viewed from a distance, these same points merge into a coherent image. From a linguistic perspective, this is how I understand what is commonly called a *language*.

Importantly, no single speaker can ever possess or master his/her *language*, only small, albeit perfectly structured, portions of it. Once again, this depends on each individual’s position along a vertical social continuum and a horizontal geographical continuum, not to mention an affective axis (i.e. one’s emotional or affective attachment to one’s variety). This linguistic variation is further shaped by complex social and cultural factors, including identity, ethnicity, religion, **peoplehood** and, by extension, nationhood (Edward, 1985; Fishman, 1992). In this sense, language functions as an abstract umbrella term encompassing both linguistic and extra-linguistic elements.

In their book *Dialectology*, Chambers and Trudgill (1980, 1998) offer a particularly useful discussion of several popular beliefs about what constitutes a language. Three criteria are frequently evoked:

1. A language is a collection of mutually intelligible varieties.
2. A language possesses a written form, a literature. The “real” language is the codified standard grammar. Variants of it are thus “incorrect,” deviations of a model.

3 I heard this only a few decades ago (Deane, Lancashire).

3. A language must be officially recognized by a governmental or national institution.

Each of these criteria proves problematical, however, and the authors systematically reveal the contradictions of such a view. The first assumes that dialects belonging to the same “language” are mutually intelligible where, in reality, this is not necessarily the case. For example, Cantonese and Mandarin are frequently described as dialects of Chinese, yet speakers of these varieties cannot understand one another without prior learning.

Conversely, speakers of certain dialects of German and Dutch understand each other relatively well along the **dialect continuum** that stretches across the Low Countries and western Germany. So where does German end and Dutch begin? Similar patterns occur in Scandinavia, where speakers of Danish, Norwegian and Swedish can often communicate with each other without great difficulty. If mutual intelligibility is the defining criterion of a “language,” then Danish, Swedish and Norwegian might reasonably be considered varieties of a “Scandinavian” language. Yet the speakers consider each of these as distinct languages, thus reflecting historical, political and cultural considerations rather than purely linguistic ones.

The second criterion – that a language must possess a written form or a literature – is also easily refuted. Writing systems are relatively recent cultural inventions (Proto-Sinaitic script, 1800-1500 BC). In this sense, Franklin’s RMS was just one attempt in a long line of efforts to accurately convert words into writing. The significance of this is that human languages existed as uniquely oral systems for tens of thousands of years before writing ever emerged. Even today, many of the world’s languages have never developed standardized writing system or have only recently acquired one. Numerous indigenous languages of the Americas, for example, developed orthographies only in the last century. Does this make them “non-languages” or “dialects” and, if so, dialects of what? The most appropriate and neutral term might be “**idiom**” in such ambiguous cases (Le Dù and Le Berre, 2019).

The third criterion, namely, the idea that a language must be officially recognized by a state, is likewise flawed. Many languages lack official recognition despite having long-standing speech communities. One example is France where, historically, Basque, Breton and Occitan have never been officially recognized by the French government (either before or since the Revolution), despite the fact that they have centuries-old written traditions and their speakers have distinct cultural and ethnic identities reaching back well over a millennium (even more so for the Basques). Regardless, French remains the sole language of the state. This illustrates how political and ideological forces can marginalize minority linguistic communities.

Conversely, in 2025, the Scottish Parliament recognized Scots as one of Scotland's official languages, alongside Scottish Gaelic. Formerly considered by many to be a corrupt dialect, this is yet another example of how political and ideological decisions determine the frontiers between language and dialect/variety and also how artificial these distinctions are from a purely linguistic perspective. Does a parliamentary decree make Scots any more coherent phonologically, grammatically or lexically than it was previously?

In the end, the concept of language often carries implicit associations of prestige that *varieties/dialects* or *patois*, do not possess.⁴ As we have seen throughout this book, Standard English and Received Pronunciation (RP) has been widely viewed to be *the* model of linguistic correctness and qualifications such as “pure” and “beautiful” are often attributed to it (Giles, 1971, 1972a, 1972b, 1973a, 1973b, 1973c). On the other hand, regional dialects of Britain, but also American English as a whole (whether standard or non-standard), have often been described by prescriptive-minded English people as debased forms of English that have drifted away from the RP/standard model. As we have seen in this book, these so-called debased dialects are often historically more conservative, preserving phonological, grammatical or lexical features that disappeared from the standard language centuries ago. Ample evidence of this has been presented throughout this book. However, it is important to point out that dialectologists have often fallen into excesses of another kind, namely, by vaunting the linguistic “purity” of dialects in accordance with their degree of historical conservatism.

Although Chambers and Trudgill continue to use the term *dialect*, they suggest that the more neutral term *variety* is often preferable. They also emphasize that what is commonly regarded as Standard or Received Pronunciation English is perhaps better understood as a “super dialect”, simply because it is a socially privileged variety that has acquired exceptional prestige through its historical association with powerful political, educational, and cultural institutions rather than through any inherent linguistic superiority. This observation illustrates a broader point: while the boundaries drawn between languages and dialects are largely social and historical constructs, the linguistic systems themselves remain real and internally coherent.

These authors also stress that all the world's languages and dialects are “equal”, a view with which I fully agree. I would, however, formulate this principle somewhat differently. From a strictly linguistic perspective, all languages are systemically equal: each constitutes a fully functional system capable of meeting the communicative needs of its speakers within particular

4 Recall that, during the 16th century, there were those that complained that “English had no grammar!” This is a clear sign that speakers were not yet sure that English deserved to be considered a full-fledged language with the same legitimacy of Latin or Greek.

cultural, social and physical environments. Difficulties arise not from linguistic drawbacks or limitations but rather when speakers of marginalized languages or varieties are excluded from full participation in the economic, political, and intellectual institutions that shape national life – institutions that are often dominated by speakers of a prestigious standard variety (cf. **diglossia**). For this reason, their language or variety may not develop the same specialized registers or technical vocabularies associated with those influential domains. A well-known historical example is English itself, which for several centuries after the Norman Conquest functioned as a **low** variety in relation to Anglo-Norman French and Latin. Differences of this kind are, once again, sociopolitical rather than linguistic.

This observation brings us full circle to the discussion in Chapter 1 about the sociolinguistic implications of the *scala naturae*, or Great Chain of Being. Franklin's RMS was conceived precisely as an attempt to break these linguistic chains of exclusion.

To summarize, in this study, a *language* is best understood not as a single homogeneous system of the kind proposed by Chomsky (1965), but rather as an abstract sociocultural construct emerging from multifarious concentrations of idiolects and dialects that are structured along infinitely subtle social and geographic continua.

acrolect – a term borrowed from creolistics, where it normally denotes the most socially prestigious variety within a post-creole continuum, typically the variety closest to the lexifier standard. In this book, the term is extended to multidialectal communities in medieval England to refer to the most socially prestigious varieties, namely, Anglo-Norman French (the “high” secular language and Latin, the high ecclesiastical standard).

affective proximity – the emotional attachment speakers feel toward their own linguistic variety, whether prestigious or stigmatized, arising from overt prestige, covert prestige or cultural identity. In this book, the concept is closely linked to Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), which analyzes how social and emotional factors determine speech convergence and divergence. Also cf. François Chevillet's *axe affectif* or “affective axis” (1991).

allophone – a phonetic variant of a phoneme; that is, one of several non-contrastive pronunciations of the same phoneme which do not result in a difference in lexical meaning.

Although allophones do not distinguish meaning, they may carry sociolinguistic information such as regional identity, social affiliation or prestige. For example, speakers may identify a Scottish or Welsh speaker by the realization of the phoneme /r/ as an alveolar trill [r] in the word *right*, whereas many speakers

of southern English varieties realize /r/ as an alveolar approximant [ɹ] or, in areas of the southwest of England, a retroflex approximant [ɻ]. In all cases, the meaning of the word remains unchanged (see *phoneme*).

a-prefixing – a morphosyntactic feature historically characteristic of southern and Midland varieties of English, and today most strongly associated with southern American English, particularly Appalachian English. Diachronically, a-prefixing derives from OE morphology, especially *on-/in-* + *-ande/-inde*. In present-day English, it survives as a reduced prefix *a-* attached to certain verbal *-ing* forms, as in *They went a-hunting*. It is also used in verbal morphology to express the past participial: *The bearskin was a-stretched out*. Historically, this *a-*prefix is a reduced form of OE *ge-* (+ past participle). Historically, both types of *a-*prefixing were widespread throughout colonial English, including New England, as evidenced by literary sources such as Lowell's *Biglow Papers* (1848).

badume – A highly fragmented, purely oral, socially stigmatized micro-dialect, comparable to the Breton (Brittonic-Celtic) varieties of modern western Brittany. Similar micro-dialects once existed in Old English (cf. Vulgar Old English), Middle English and Early Modern English and, some would argue, persisted until recent decades. The term comes from Tregor and Cornouaillais Breton *ba du-mañ*, meaning “round here” or “in our area.” When asked how a word or phrase is said, a Breton dialect speaker often responds: “*Ba du-me ve lâret X pe Y*” – “Round here (i.e., in our parish or home region) we say X or Y.” The concept conveys both local linguistic identity, the consciousness that variation exists all around them, and social solidarity, aligning with what this book calls a “paritary” variety or register. For English-speaking sociolinguists, the term *basilect* is used here as a convenient equivalent, capturing the full meaning of *badume*.

basilect – like “acrolect,” this is another term borrowed from creolistics describing the most stigmatized levels of a creole language. For the reasons just explained, I have used it with the meaning of “badume.” In the context of our discussion, it refers here to the highly unstable, stigmatized versions of “vulgar” Middle English and Early Modern English varieties of England and colonial America (for instance, by indentured servants).

bel usage – literally “beautiful usage,” Gendron (2009) uses this term to refer to a register of Francien French spoken by the 17th- and 18th-century aristocracy. Characterized by elegance, refinement, and rhetorical effect, it was the preferred style of the Parisian *salons*. Contrary to expectations, it was grammatically and stylistically noted for its simplicity and directness. *Bel usage* is contrasted with *grand usage*, used by lawyers and clergy, and *bon usage*, which emphasized strict grammatical correctness. He argued the influence of this register in the foundation of Québécois French which preserves numerous aspects of its lexicon

and phonology, for instance, *fret* rather than *froid*, [wɛ] rather than [wa], etc.

Bioprogram Language Theory (BLT) – a theory in creole linguistics proposed by Derek Bickerton to account for the structural similarities observed across creole languages, despite differences in their lexifier languages (e.g. English, French, Dutch). The theory holds that creole languages develop out of pidgins – grammatically reduced systems of communication arising in multilingual contact situations. Because humans are biologically “hardwired” with an innate capacity for language acquisition (drawing on Chomskyan ideas of Universal Grammar), there exists a limited set of grammatical structures available for building a fully functional language. According to BLT, it is primarily the children in pidgin-speaking communities the missing grammatical structure, transforming pidgins into fully developed creole languages with coherent phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon.

In this study, the concept is extended to the linguistic situation of 17th- and 18th-century colonial America, where speakers of diverse English regional dialects were brought together in shared settlement communities. Here, communication strategies were streamlined through a combination of dialect contact, the *sharedness principle* (see below), and the structuring role played by children and adolescents of the founder generations.

breaking – in this book, “breaking” refers primarily to a feature current throughout the American South today. This phenomenon has its origins in 17th-century southern England where Middle English short vowels (which were generally tense in quality, not lax) were lengthened (cf. Katherine Philips, 1632, Chapter 17). These lengthened vowels (corresponding to RP/GA lax vowels) were extended to a point that provoked a phonetic split, that is, the introduction of a glide in the middle of the vowel: [heːjɪd] for “head”, [bæːjɪd] for “bad”, [siːjɪn ~ sɪːjɪn] for “sin”... It is closely linked to “drawling,” a characteristic once associated with New England rustic speech and strongly condemned by both Franklin and Webster (see *off-glide*). We saw spellings of “ear” spelt *eyer* or *ayer* in the 17th-century Hempstead town records of New York suggesting pronunciations such as [ɛjəɹ] or [æjəɹ].

bridge vowels – Shorrocks (1998) describes these as a “continuous run of variants” which could also be called “transition vowels.” In multidialectal contact situations of the same language, it is extremely difficult determine the “phonemic” boundaries separating these strings of vowels for one important reason. Despite significant overlapping between them, dialects function as individual linguistic systems which, by extension, reflect separate social histories. In such situations, depending on the dialect systems involved, the same vowel can belong to two different phonemes. This is why the notion of

“bridge” or “transition” vowels is so important, because they are at the heart of vowel shifts.

chain shift – a “chain shift” results from interdependent phonetic changes by which a bridge vowel of a given social or geographic variety occupies the space of an adjacent phoneme. This can potentially blur phonemic boundaries between varieties. Such shifts can trigger multiple sound changes and result in the reconfiguration of phonemic contrasts.

There are two types of chain shifts, a “push chain” and a “pull chain.” A “push chain,” in which one sound or “phone” displaces another, and a pull chain, in which a sound moves to fill a phonetic or phonemic gap.

The *pin-pen* merger, a phenomenon with deep roots in southern England, causes the pronunciation of “pen” [pen] to shift to “pin” [pm]. In 17th-century Suffolk and in the London area more generally, the opposite shift occurred with “bill” shifting to [bɛl] and “hill” to [hɛl]... These interdependent changes illustrate the difficulty of defining a single “English” phonemic system in the context of dialectal and social variation (cf. *phonetic range*).

Chancery English – traditionally considered the variety of written English used by the English royal Chancery in 15th-century London, and often credited with helping to regularize English spelling, grammar and vocabulary, thereby influencing the development of Standard Modern English. We have noted Laura Wright’s criticisms of this hypothesis (Wright, 2001, 2-3; Chapter 10). While Chancery English played a crucial role in elaborating the standard, I argue that the full range of social and economic institutions – such as butchers, cattle merchants, dyers, soldiers, etc. – each contributed their own idioms and practices. The clergy contributed significantly to this linguistic picture. It was the convergence of all these idioms that shaped the social varieties that ultimately formed London English. At the paritary level, London English itself underwent a creole-like coalescence of varieties. In fact, it was likely the contact between these diverse linguistic varieties from around the country and home counties, and the linguistic melding resulting from it, that provoked many of the innovations observed in 18th-century London distinguishing it from the more conservative varieties of English spoken in the rest of England.

clitic – a generic term (related to enclitic) for any bound morpheme (i.e. it cannot stand alone) and must be tied phonologically to a host word. Clitics are morphologically dependent and grammatically functional.

cluster – a small group of speakers communicating in a restricted social environment (limited to family, neighbourhood and close-knit social or work-related institutions). Socially bound together within a larger population, their speech often shares usage or social variables (e.g., similar vowel or consonant

realizations) (see **network** and **speech community**). This ties in well with Le Dû and Le Berre's concept of the bonds between "idiom" and "institution" (see below).

code-mixing – the use of linguistic elements (such as words, phrases, idioms) from two or more languages or varieties of the same language within a single sentence. This most often within intimate and affective social settings (among family, close friends, neighbours) who also share the same multilingual or multidialectal culture. The effect is a blending of codes into one such as "*I can't believe it! Tu sais ce qu'il m'a dit, that idiot?*"

code-switching – the practice of alternating between two or more languages or varieties within the same conversation, but not the same sentence (i.e. **code-mixing**). Both are frequent in paritary contexts among bilingual or bidialectal speakers within the same "cluster" or "institution(s)" and who share the same codes of linguistic evaluation.

codification – coined by Peter Trudgill, this is generally described as an authoritative act imposed by a governing institution by which formal linguistic rules (i.e. a norm, standard or practice) are imposed on a target group. It can be in the form of grammars, dictionaries, spelling guides. In law, or other professional institutions (legal codes, statutes, technical guides) (cf. *grand usage*). Franklin's *Reformed Mode of Spelling* was an overt attempt at codifying pronunciation as a general practice across Great Britain and the British Empire, not only North America. His RMS model was an attempt to codify what he imagined to be the most sophisticated register of London English.

Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) – a sociolinguistic theory developed by Howard Giles that explains how speakers adjust their speech and communicative behaviour in interaction. Speakers may converge toward the style of their interlocutors to signal solidarity or gain social acceptance, or diverge to emphasize social distance, assert authority or convey superiority. Similarly, speakers of a stigmatized variety or language may diverge from their home language as a strategy to align with a higher-status group.

continuum – normally called a "dialect continuum." In this book, the notion of a dialect continuum functions along two axes: geographical and social. It is most often used in connection with a geographical continuum referring to linguistic changes (phonological, morphological, grammatical, syntactical, lexical...) along a given geographical route. It is highly significant in our discussions given that these kinds of low status varieties or "low" varieties were dominant throughout England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland during the colonial period (see **dialect**). It is most relevant when applied to highly variable, fragmented, "broad" dialects

that we have defined as **basilects/badumes**.

The idea is that as one travels from point A to point B, linguistic differences may be observable but minimal. As one reaches point C and D an increasing number of differences are observable. By the time one reaches point H, the differences between it and point A may be so significant that serious difficulties of comprehension can emerge. Generally, there are no clear linguistic lines where one dialect begins and another stops or even one dialect stops and another language begins. An example of a geographical continuum is seen between Dutch and German dialects. Where does the Dutch “language” end and German “language” begin? The same is true for Gascon (Occitan) > Catalan > Aragonese, both transitional varieties, and Spanish (Castilian). Again, this raises the sticky question of the difference between “dialect” and “language.” Note that even the UN, in its studies of the world’s language, has been unable to differentiate the two and, for this reason, cannot calculate the exact number of “languages” in the world.

The concept can also be applied to a social continuum, the idea that a language varies in terms of social prestige and acceptability. Based on the way an individual speaks, one can often identify not only the geographical origins of the speaker, but also where that person is situated on the vertical social axis. Here we have seen this is a relic of the Great Chain of Being (cf. Chapter 1). The lower on the social scale, the less acceptable (and non-standard) the language generally tends to be (i.e. low language). The higher one goes up the social ladder, the more appropriate (and standard) the language is viewed (i.e. “high” language), (cf. **diglossia**).

contoid – a term introduced by Kenneth Pike (1943) to distinguish certain speech sounds from traditional consonants. Contoids are produced with significant constriction, such as the syllabic [ŋ] or [l], in contrast to their non-syllabic counterparts [n] and [l]. While the IPA classifies these sounds as consonants, the use of the syllabic diacritic [̥] by the IPA acknowledges their distinct articulatory properties. Pike also challenged the classification of [w], [j], and [ɹ] as consonants, identifying them instead as **vocoids** (see below). Remarkably, John Hart, in his *Orthographie* (1569), designed a specific character for syllabic [l] (cf. Chapter 13) as well as syllabic [r] because he considered they differed phonologically (he didn’t use this term) from /l/ and /r/.

convergence – a communicative strategy (cf. **Communication Accommodation Theory**) in which a speaker adapts their speech or behaviour toward that of an interlocutor, typically to signal solidarity, reduce social distance or gain approval and acceptance.

couche sociale – literally “social layer,” a term preferred by some French

sociologists as more relevant than “social class” for analysing contemporary Western societies. While sociolinguists such as Labov maintain class distinctions (e.g., three levels in NYC), others, like Trudgill, recognize finer gradations (MMC, LMC, HWC, MWC, LWC). I treat this vertical sociolinguistic axis as a continuing legacy of hierarchical social stratification, reminiscent of the Great Chain of Being (cf. Chapter 10).

covert prestige – is a term used by William Labov to describe the social value or respect that a non-standard or stigmatized speech variety holds within a particular speech community (cluster or network), even though it is viewed as substandard by the dominant social group.

diachronic linguistics – the study of how languages change over time, including changes in phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. It examines the internal development of a language, often using historical documents, but is distinct from historical linguistics, which typically also involves comparing related languages to reconstruct earlier stages (cf. *Historical linguistics* below).

dialect – in this book, I use *dialect* and *variety* as synonyms. However, Chambers and Trudgill (1998) distinguish the two, noting that *variety* is neutral whereas *dialect* has historically been perceived as inferior to “language” (see Chapter 10). They emphasize that all dialects are linguistically and systemically equal to the RP/English standard. The difference between lies in the fact that its codification and institutional support: the standard, through refinement and formalization in legal, medical, and administrative contexts, becomes what they term a “super-dialect” (cf. idiom, patois, register).

Similarly, in the framework of this book, dialect, variety, *badume*/basilect, patois are all viewed to be linguistically equal systemically, if not socially. A “standard language” corresponds to “language” in the popular mind and, in this respect, is thus merely a cover term for a “dialect” which has been officially recognized and linguistically codified to function as the prestigious representative “norm” of a political entity such as a nation, nation state or state.

dialect mixture – a term preferred to koineization by Trudgill (2008) and Mufwene (2008). I define dialect mixture as a generic word referring to the blending of diverse dialects (including codified varieties) of the same language. This often results from contacts within colonial settings of the kind studied in this book. I consider this to be an important component of the koineization process, but it is too general and certainly not an adequate term to replace koineization which, on the contrary, refers to a long, complex, multi-stage process (cf. **koineization** below).

diglossia – a sociolinguistic situation in which two distinct language varieties

coexist within a single speech community, with a high variety (H) used in formal, literary, official, or educational contexts, and a low variety (L) used in everyday speech. The term was coined by Charles Ferguson (1959), who applied it to Arabic, distinguishing Classical Arabic (H) from the less prestigious Arabic vernaculars (L).

This concept has been extended to applied to situations where the high variety and low varieties belong to separate languages, as was the case in medieval England when Norman-French was spoken by “heie men” and English dialects by “lowe men,” as reported by Robert of Gloucester, and reflected in William Caxton’s 15th-century description of low-prestige English dialect speakers were referred to as “rude vplondyssh men” (*Eneydos*, 1490, chapter 10).

disparitary register – from the French *disparitaire*, referring to a high, formal register used in solemn or official contexts (cf. the “norm” below). It conveys social and emotional distance or coldness, often highlighting a speaker’s perceived superiority over a lower-status interlocutor. Functionally, it is a model often associated with “divergence” (Giles & Ogay, 2007; Le Dù & Le Berre, 2019).

divergence – a communicative strategy (cf. CAT) in which a speaker accentuates linguistic or social differences to assert social identity and mark group boundaries. This can occur within a cluster or network sharing an idiom of covert prestige—for example, South Welsh dock workers from Casnewydd might exaggerate their Welsh accents when speaking to an RP-speaking engineer, or a bank official might amplify a disparitary RP register when denying a loan to a woman with a strong regional accent. These examples, while caricatured, reflect sociolinguistic experiments by Howard Giles (1972, 1973, 1978, 1980).

drawling – the elongation of vowels that are normally short and lax in GA and RP English, and short and “tense” in ME, drawling characterized rural speech in colonial America, including New England. In the US South, it often results in “breaking” (cf. off-glides) and the elongated vowels create the impression of slower speech. Historically, this feature originates in southeastern England, particularly London and home counties, where formerly tense EME short vowels in stressed syllables were lengthened – a pattern observable in the rhymes of 17th-century poets such as Katherine Philips (1632, cf. Chapter 16). Drawling, therefore, is of English origin and formed part of the American colonial feature pool. It was, however, vigorously condemned by both Franklin and Webster (cf. Chapter 17). There are indications that breaking also could be heard in 17th-century England and would not necessarily be an American innovation.

ecclesiastical standard – to be understood by their *badume*-speaking congregations, medieval English clergymen adapted their spoken English to local varieties. It is likely that, initially, they drew on the inter-dialects of rural market

towns as models. Le Dû and Le Berre (2019) describe a similar development in Breton-speaking Brittany during the early modern period. Since the goal was to teach God's word, a lofty idiom was needed, both to convey abstract theological concepts and to impress and inspire parishioners. The resulting disparitary literary model that arose are exemplified by texts such as Gaytryge's *Lay Folks Catechism* (1357) and Wycliffe's English Bible translation (1381), which laid the foundations for subsequent Bible translations, culminating in the King James Bible (1611) which remained the ecclesiastical standard until the late 20th century. Chapter 10 illustrates this with Elder Millard Pruitt's spontaneous 1973 sermon in North Carolina, delivered in an idiom clearly influenced by the ecclesiastical standard. Similarly, Franklin demonstrated the ability to shift seamlessly between codes in his writings.

As the church trained clerics who taught literacy to laypeople, the ecclesiastical standard naturally established the core elements of codification and standardization that later influenced secular English.

enclitic – a morpheme, typically functioning as a pronoun, auxiliary verb or particle, that is attached to the beginning or end of a word. In standard English, the contraction *I'll* [aɪl] illustrates this: the <'ll> [l] is a postfixed enclitic representing *shall* or *will*. In southwestern English dialects, *I* (< OE *Ic*) was pronounced [ɪtʃ] or [ʌtʃ ~ ɹtʃ] in areas of Devon and Somerset during EME period and until now, so *I will* could be realized as [tʃɪl], with [tʃ] functioning as a postfixed enclitic representing *I*. Similarly, the Middle English verbal enclitic *-se* for *shall* appears in Shakespeare's spelling *Ice* [əɪs ~ eɪs], meaning "I shall." A modern dialect example I recorded in Deane, Bolton, is [as bɪ 'gɪm 'ne:], "I shall be going now" showing [as] functioning as the enclitic *I shall*.

feature pool – the collection of competing dialect features present within a given colonial settlement. Some features were prestigious, linked to the rising standard mesolect spoken by the most literate members of society and thus preserved in writing, while others were less prestigious or stigmatized, confined to specific idioms and institutions. Their absence from writing does not imply disappearance. A key example examined in Part III is the "New England short o" (Chapters 21 and 22). Imported from the Midlands and eastern England, it was an integral part of Franklin's native phonemic inventory. By the late 19th century, it was stigmatized and, by the 1970s, largely recessive (Avis, 1971). The sharedness principle played a crucial role in determining which features were retained or discarded during the koineization process.

fixed pronunciation – a term used by Samuel Johnson to critique Thomas Sheridan's proposal for a pronunciation dictionary. Johnson argued that a single, "fixed" pronunciation could not be imposed on English speakers due

to the immense diversity of dialects, noting that even among England's elite, opinions differed: Lord Yonge, considered the finest speaker in the Commons, pronounced *great* [gɹi:t], while Lord Chesterfield, the leading voice in the House of Lords, insisted on [gɹɛ:t], and an Irishman would say [gɹɛit] – the latter being the form that survives in modern RP/GA (Bowen, 1905, 545). Polly Stevenson, in her September 26, 1768 letter to Franklin, similarly doubted that English pronunciation could ever be “fix'd.” Franklin, however, may have entertained the idea as feasible because his New England's variety was relatively unified, making the diversity of English dialects seem a surmountable obstacle.

founder generation principle – coined by Salikoko Mufwene, this term refers to the idea that the first group of settlers in a colony establishes not only the cultural but also the linguistic foundations of the community. Later arrivals adapt their speech to these established norms, a process largely explained by Communication Accommodation Theory (cf. Chapter 11). Connections to Bickerton's Bioprogram Language Theory are discussed in Chapter 12.

General American – contrary to the RP English accent, General American is precisely that, and is used by the vast majority of Americans today with minor variations. Unlike RP it is not associated with a social elite and should not be confused with “standard American English,” which relates to grammar. One's command of standard grammar is a criterion for social judgement, however. General American (GA) is sometimes referred to as a “neutral” American accent and is most associated with the variety of American English spoken within a region Hans Kurath called the “Midland fan,” also known as the “General American fan.” Very broadly speaking, at its narrowest point, this fan extends westward, from Midland America. Starting in western Pennsylvania and Ohio, it spreads south-westwardly through New Mexico, Arizona as far as the southern California coast. It stretches north-westwardly to the to Oregon, Washington and Alaska. Nor is it strictly “American” because a nearly identical form of it is spoken throughout much of Canada starting with western Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

Until recently, General American generally excluded marked varieties that were most common along the entire North American seaboard from the Maritime provinces of Canada and New England down to Florida. Throughout this entire region distinct regional accents and grammatical varieties were spoken. Nor was it heard in the southern states, that is, the region once called “Dixie” (i.e. the former Confederacy) or the Appalachians and the southwestern states of Oklahoma, Arkansas and Texas. Of course, General American is heard in all of the major towns and cities of these regions today and is spreading. It is also virtually the only accent heard in the North American media. However, it does not have nearly the same level of overt prestige as RP/standard English.

grand usage – when discussing the development of the Québécois koine, Gendron (2009) uses the term *grand usage* to refer to the highly codified, formal (disparitary) register of French spoken by the clergy (ecclesiastical standard) and highly formal, technical “idiom” of lawyers that characterizes legal “institutions.” It was considered superior to the *bel usage*, which emphasized aesthetic elegance rather than conciseness and technical precision. In pre-revolutionary France, the *grand usage* resembled what we might call “double speak” today, and was characterized by a highly specialized vocabulary inaccessible to non-initiates (cf. differentiation; CAT). Its socially authoritative and linguistically codified functions contributed to the development of modern standard French. Gendron highlights the role of both *grand usage* and *bel usage* in the koineization of Québécois French.

Great Vowel Shift – coined by Otto Jespersen in 1909 in *A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles*, the Great Vowel Shift (GVS) describes the raising of Middle English long vowels between roughly 1450 and 1800. While Jespersen’s work is highly influential, the GVS primarily applies to the development of Received Pronunciation (RP) and General American (GA) English. Many English varieties, particularly in northern England and Scotland, were only marginally affected: for example, Lancashire [bɹi:t] and Doric [brɪxt] “bright,” northern English and Scots [mak] “make,” and Lincolnshire [mu:θ ~ mæiθ] “mouth.” In this sense, the GVS can be seen as an unconscious reflection of Milroy’s “standard ideology,” as non-standard varieties have been overlooked by linguists who, like all literate, standard speakers, have been conditioned by prescriptive views. Hence, their own sense of “overt prestige” blinds them as to the value of these non-standard English varieties.

high language – see **diglossia**

historical linguistics – the study of the historical development of languages, including the reconstruction of ancestor languages and the examination of relationships among languages. It traces how languages evolve over time, such as the development of English from Old English through Germanic roots to Proto-Indo-European. The focus is on understanding the history and interconnections of languages, and it can include applications such as historical phonology, morphology and syntax. A narrow application of historical linguistics, restricted here to historical phonology, is Mazarin’s identification of four overlapping phases of the evolution of English (A, B1, B2, C1, C2, D) (Mazarin, 2020).

idiom (see also **institution**) – an idiom is a generic term for any form of language – whether a variety or register that is used within a particular institution (Le Dû and Le Berre prefer the term “register” to variety). At the macro-level, it can refer to the unified, officially sanctioned, disparitary, codified norm of a nation-

state. At the micro-level, it denotes language use within a localized social or professional group, such as a family, a fishing-boat crew, a team of carpenters, agricultural workers of a given parish, or a medical team in a community hospital.

Members of an institution adopt a specific “idiom,” which Le Dù and Le Berre define as “any form of speech which is judged by its members... to be an appropriate vehicle for communication and which they feel to be suitable for the functions of that particular institution. Each institution has its corresponding idiom and, conversely, no idiom can exist without a corresponding institution” (2019). In other words, “idioms” and “institutions” are inseparable: one cannot exist without the other.

imperfect rhymes – in Chapter 15, I identified a number of rhymes that appear “imperfect” to modern RP or General American speakers, such as *way ~ sea, seen ~ brain, bear ~ dear, rather ~ together*, and, involving back vowels, *cost ~ coast, God ~ blood, wood ~ flood, road ~ rod, love ~ prove*, among others. While the first group can be accounted for quite easily on historical grounds, the second group, involving back vowels, presents a considerably greater challenge; this motivates the detailed discussion in Chapters 20, 21 and 22. These so-called “imperfect” rhymes were in fact either fully perfect, or at least near-perfect, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Moreover, they are attested not only in the poetry of New England writers such as Franklin, Barlow and Dwight, but also in that of English poets including Dryden, Pope, Herrick and others, another example of continuity.

institution – Le Dù and Le Berre’s sociolinguistic model is built on two interrelated concepts: “institution” and “idiom.” They define an institution as “any relatively stable social structure which serves as a framework for human communication and interaction” (Le Dù & Le Berre, 2019, 97-114). Institutions can vary widely in scale. At a micro-level, an institution might be a nuclear family, a fishing boat crew or a group of parish farmer labourers. At a broader level, it can encompass networks within larger social entities, such as the teaching staff of a school or university, a military regiment, or a government ministry.

One strength of linking “institution” and “idiom” is methodological: it allows linguists to define and describe social and linguistic units precisely, a clarity often lacking in the more ambiguous notion of a “speech community.” Furthermore, the institution–idiom framework complements Leslie and James Milroy’s concepts of “cluster” and “network” (L. Milroy, 1980; J. Milroy & J. Harris, 1980; L. Milroy, 1982; L. & J. Milroy, 1993).

inter-dialects – varieties that arose during the Middle Ages in market towns through contact with speakers of surrounding micro-dialects (*badume*-basilectal

speakers). Over decades or even centuries, a process resembling koineization occurred: the English spoken in these towns was not fully stabilized or codified, but speakers developed a sense of what was linguistically acceptable. Mobile individuals in certain professions – cattle merchants, masons, or farmers selling surplus products – were particularly adept at using these inter-dialects, a phenomenon I have observed in Western Brittany. The result was a form of dialect mixture similar to that later observed in the colonies. Because inter-dialects were grammatically and lexically streamlined, they were more generally intelligible than the highly localized parish-level *badumes*. It is likely that ecclesiastical standards ultimately trace their roots to these varieties.

International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) – founded by Paul Passy with the assistance of Henry Sweet and Otto Jespersen, the IPA is a standardized system of phonetic symbols representing the sounds (phones) of all spoken languages, providing a consistent way to transcribe pronunciation accurately and unambiguously. In a sense, it is a realization of Francis Lodwick’s dream of “an universal alphabet” (1686).

koine – a koine is a linguistic system or variety that emerges from dialect contact and levelling. Contrary to what has sometimes been argued, this process involves the conscious selection of features by speakers of stigmatized varieties to facilitate communication across diverse groups. In North America, koines developed a bipolar range of registers, from highly disparitary forms (well-documented in written texts) to largely oral, paritary registers, of which few traces survive. At every stage of koineization, social pressures – both from above and below – determine the nature of speakers’ “feature choices” as they actively attempt to shape their own idioms (including in terms of registers and varieties).

koineization – a process in which dialect mixture is a key component, but its long-term outcome is the coalescence and socially-guided blending of dialects into a coherent linguistic system. This process is exemplified in the North American colonies during the first century of settlement during which the first recognizable koines appear. At the parity oral level, the process unfolds in stages:

1. Founder generation – Establishment of an initial feature pool of competing linguistic elements.
2. Input from later incomers – New dialect speakers typically adapt their speech to the established community, often motivated by social, cultural or linguistic assimilation in challenging and hostile environments.
3. Sharedness principle – Adoption of forms most common across all dialect speakers, a form of “feature selection,” whereby speakers consciously

choose specific features from the existing pool in accordance with the social pressures imposed on them from above below.

Depending on the social functions and institutions in which language is used, this leads to bipolar registers, ranging from disparitary to paritary varieties. By the early 18th century, these koines and registers were largely established, entering a stabilization phase marked by dialect levelling, where varieties were further streamlined through the active participation of speakers.

language – see **dialect**

language accommodation – see Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT)

lax vowels – vowels produced with minimal muscular constriction, typically shorter than their “tense” counterparts. In Early Modern English (EME), vowels now considered lax in GA/RP were more tense, pronounced with greater muscular tension (similar to French /i/) and slightly higher in the mouth. Importantly, tense vowels are not necessarily long, and some lax vowels can be long in certain dialects (e.g., [dɪːd] in southwestern England, Wells (1989). Following this distinction, I consider it useful to describe vowels by quantity (“long” vs “short”) as distinct from quality (“tense” vs “lax”).

levelling – this is often described as the disappearance of distinctive dialectal features in contexts where dialect speakers of the same language cohabit the same social institutions within the same geographical space. In this book, levelling clearly occurred within the colonial settlements of North America. The bottom line is that speakers adopt features of language which are a) most common to all speakers (cf. “sharedness principle”) and b) less regionally and marked or socially stigmatized, hence more prestigious.

Levelling is not the result of a sort of linguistic “natural selection,” as it is sometimes presented. The point I have been making is that, quite the contrary, it is the speakers in the colonial communities studied in this book who consciously and actively decided which features to retain or to reject based on the internal codes of linguistic evaluation that had developed among them over time. Neither is levelling a linear process. The degree to which it occurs depends on the social institutions in which various idioms are used. In institutions favouring paritary idioms (influenced by older *badumes*/basilects), the extent of levelling will be less generally pronounced than in institutions where the prestigious disparitary standard language is promoted. In this last case, such speakers are perceived of less educated members of society as and “more intelligent.” Here we see how one’s command of disparitary language can be used as a tool to wield social power.

We have seen in Chapter 10 that, during the Middle English period and Early Modern English period, contacts between multi-dialectal speakers in the

market towns of Europe resulted in the development of regional inter-dialectal varieties which were marked by considerable streamlining or “levelling,” one result being, for instance, the simplification of verbal morphology, the outcome often resembling creole-like simplifications.

lenition – the voicing of voiceless consonants, typically in intervocalic or external sandhi positions. A common example in American English (and some British and Northern Irish varieties; cf. Chapter 23) is intervocalic /t/, often realized as [t̪] or an apical flap [ɾ] in GA.

lexical set – a term used by John Wells (1988) to describe a class of words that shares the same vowel (typically in RP). His “key words,” *Price, Fleece, Kit, Meat*, etc. were chosen as representative words to identify the category of vowel being discussed. In this book, I have added “key words” to expand the discussion of certain vowels, *girl* or *know/known*, for instance.

low language – see **diglossia**

macro-level dialectology – this refers to the study of language varieties across dialect boundaries.

mesolect – borrowed from creolistics (like *acrolect* and *basilect*), it refers here to the more refined, levelled speech of a growing middle class of literate artisans and merchants during the ME and EME period. It is this disparitary mesolectal variety from eastern England that was formed the basis of the ruling administrative and dissenting ecclesiastical institutions of Massachusetts in the 17th century, of which Franklin’s family were integral members.

micro-level dialectology – as the term implies, this refers to the study of dialects in highly restricted sociolinguistic environments with a special focus on individual speakers of idioms living in tight-knit speech communities (clusters or networks functioning in an array of institutions), often at the parish level.

minimal pairs – a concept used in phonology as early as Sir Thomas Smith *De Recta* (1568) (cf. Fig. 13.1) to demonstrate that two sounds are distinct phonemes in a language (*bid* ~ *bide*, *heal* vs *hell*, etc.). Minimal pairs are essential for identifying phonemic contrast within a single linguistic system. For example, *sit* /bɪt/ vs *seat* /bi:t/ differ only in the contrastive opposition of /ɪ/ vs /i:/ in RP/GA English. However, in Franklin’s day, we have seen that his “protophonemic” RMS system, he does not distinguish between vocalic quality and quantity.

Phonemic distinctions are, as in ME, uniquely between quantitative, for instance, “sin” /sin/ vs “seen” /si:n/ or “did” /did/ vs “deed” /di:d/, etc. Some doubts exist whether, in Franklin’s mind, his /i/ was truly tense (as in French /i/) or whether it was lax /ɪ/ as in modern GA/RP (see **proto-phoneme**). We have

also seen that Franklin (1768) uses the same minimal pairs as the orthoepists John Wallis and John Wilkins, that is, *fall* ~ *folly*, suggesting that he consulted their work. Wilkins, Wallis and Franklin claim the distinction between them is quantitative, leading to the conclusion that it was pronounced /ɒ: ~ ɑ:/, not /ɔ(:)/ as has often been imagined.

multiple negation – grammatical phenomenon common in Old English and Middle English and which, starting in the 15th century, was beginning to become stigmatized in the literary language (Nevalainen, 1998). Multiple negation was avoided early on in the ecclesiastical standards (Wycliffe Bible, Tyndale and King James) but not in the vernacular (Chaucer!) where, even today, it is alive and well, e.g. “He didn’t never do nobody no harm”! It is one of the morphological features of the ME *badumes* that has survived in American dialects, largely as a result of the sharedness principle. I have only noticed two examples in Franklin’s writings.

network – a web of social and sociolinguistic ties linking individual speakers or clusters of speakers. The strength and density of these ties influence how linguistic features are transmitted, maintained or changed. While the concept is analytically useful, its boundaries are often vague. For this reason, the approach favoured in this book is the related concept of “idiom” and its intimate interconnection with “institution” (Le Berre & Le Dù, 2019), which allows for more precise identification grounded in the specific social context of a given sociolinguistic study.

new dialect formation – the process by which a new, stable dialect emerges through prolonged contact between speakers of different dialects or languages. It involves dialect mixture, levelling and selection, resulting in linguistic features that are distinct from those of the original input varieties (see **koineization**, the concept favoured in this book).

norm – following Le Dù and Le Berre (2019, 118-119, 228-230), a linguistic *norm* may be defined as the disparitary register employed by the national administrative apparatus of the modern nation state. It is the idiom designed for use by a centralized, all-encompassing governing institution and is therefore characterized by an exceptionally broad functional range, encompassing the diverse domains administered by the state (administration, justice, health, the economy, education, defence, agriculture and others). This highly prestigious and comprehensive model is codified, transmitted through formal education, and functions as a secular literary “standard” for all formally educated members of society, a process that further reinforces its symbolic authority. From a historical perspective, the emergence of the norm is a relatively recent phenomenon, closely tied to the development of modern state institutions.

off-glide – simply put, an off-glide is the glide that introduces the second element of a diphthong. While some linguists analyse the glide itself as the second element of a diphthong, this last interpretation is misleading within the context of the present framework. In this book, the term is used more specifically to describe the “breaking” of vowels that are normally lax in GA and RP English but longer in modern southern US English. For instance, as in *head* GA /hɛd/ realized as [hɛːjɪd] in southern US English. As noted elsewhere, some French linguists do not treat glides as components of diphthongs, as seen in forms such as [wa], [ja], [ɛw], or [ej], because they see glides as being closer to consonants. Pike (1943), on the other hand, considers these introductory and final elements to be “vocoids,” hence not true vowels, but certainly not consonants.

onset vowel – in this book, onset vowel is used in reference to the first vocalic element of a diphthong. Some linguists prefer “nucleus,” which I view as inappropriate here since, in some varieties of English (and in other languages), the second element can be the predominant element, e.g. [ɪi:], which I believe triggered the GVS. Another synonym is “on-glide” which I consider misleading because no “glide” is involved.

overt prestige – a term associated with the work of William Labov, referring to the explicitly recognized social prestige attached to a standard or high-status disparitary variety of a language and that reflects the positive social value and pride associated with using or mastering forms that are socially sanctioned as correct, educated or prestigious.

orthoepist – in past centuries, orthoepists were scholars who sought to define and impose what they considered to be “correct” English pronunciation. The model was based on the speech of London-area elites, in particular as used by members of the the Court of England. We saw in Chapter 13 that Sir Thomas Smith (1568) is generally considered to be the first of these.

paritary registers (cf. varieties) – reserved for communication along a horizontal social axis “between equals, people who are similar to ourselves and with whom we share intimate bonds” (Le Dû & Le Berre, 2019, 133). The advantage of this term over, say, “informal,” is that the emphasis is not only on social equality between speakers but also, even if it is not overtly expressed, “**affective proximity**” (cf. Chevillet, 1991), a dimension which I feel has been sorely neglected in sociolinguistics. It is this paritary and affective register that has always been dominant in rural and in working class communities more generally, whether stigmatized or not. This affective dimension of commonality and solidarity is what is at the heart of “covert prestige.” Finally, it is also important to consider that non-standard dialects also have “registers,” levels of language functioning according to the internal rules of the institutions in which

they are used.

peoplehood – a term coined by John Edwards in *Language, Society and Identity* (1985) to denote a shared sense of belonging, affective attachment and collective identity among people who speak the same form of language and share common cultural practices. The emphasis is on shared solidarity and emotional identification grounded in everyday linguistic and social interactions.

peopleness – a related but distinct concept used by Joshua Fishman in his *The Rise and Fall of Ethnicity* (1992). Fishman employs *peopleness* to explain how ethnicity functions as a powerful source of collective identity, rooted in a shared history, language and symbolic practices – often religious in nature – and, crucially, tied to a belief in common biological origins. The term implies not merely group membership but a deeply felt sense of collective existence and historical continuity as a “people.” I have argued elsewhere that this helps explain the intense emotional responses of defenders of minority languages and varieties, who often experience language loss as a form of the ethnic and social extinction of their “family.” In this sense, *peopleness* – and, more broadly, *peoplehood* – may be understood as an extension of the family and kinship model to the level of the wider social group.

phoneme – the minimal distinctive sound unit in a language or variety that permits differences in meaning. In English, /p/ and /b/ function as phonemes, as shown by the minimal pair /pɪg/ vs /bɪg/, where meaning hinges solely on the contrast between a voiceless and a voiced bilabial stop. In this book, however, the concept of the phoneme is applied only within individual varieties that share a single, coherent phonemic system; it cannot be extended across dialects. Claims that there are “44 phonemes in English” typically refer to RP and obscure the fact that a phoneme in RP (or GA) is not necessarily a phoneme in other, non-standard varieties, and vice versa.

A case in point is Shorrocks’ demonstration that the Bolton dialect possesses two mid-front phonemes, /ɛ:/ and /ɛ:/, a distinction absent from RP – yet Lancashire English is uncontroversially English. Similarly, some varieties of Doric Scots preserve the voiceless velar fricative /x/, lost in southern English during the 18th-century (though retained by speakers such as Isaac Newton, d. 1727), and until recently /ŋh/ in <kn-> clusters was still heard in Cumbria. For this reason, when dealing with multidialectal situations, I favour the use of phonetic ranges rather than abstract phonemic inventories within a stabilized variety sharing a coherent phonemic system.

phonetic range – an alternative to the concept of the *phoneme* when dealing with multiple dialects of the same language. Dialects often possess competing phonemic systems that differ not only from RP and GA but also from one another.

Briefly, different dialects can have phonemes that share the same allophones. It is this that provokes vocalic shifting. Paradoxically, despite frequent emphasis on differences between RP and GA, these varieties are far closer to each other than either is to Yorkshire English, South Welsh English, Scots or Appalachian English. In such contexts, significant variation can be expected across many of Wells' lexical sets. In Lincolnshire alone (Chapter 15), *MOUTH* was recorded in the 1960s as [mu:θ], [mæiθ], [meiθ], etc. Asking what the phoneme is in such cases is the wrong question.

pin-pen merger – a vowel merger occurring before nasals with deep historical roots in England that was subsequently exported to the English colonies. Like drawling and vowel breaking, it is often associated with southern US English today; however, abundant evidence from New England and New York town records shows that it was once far more widespread. The merger characterized Benjamin Franklin's native pronunciation – as reflected in spellings such as *git* for “get” and *frind* for “friend” – and that of his uncle Benjamin as well, suggesting that it was also a family characteristic with roots in 17th-century Northamptonshire.

polite speech – a term commonly used in Franklin's lifetime to describe the refined, standard speech of London's high middle class and aristocracy. As with other forms along the vertical social axis, judgements about politeness align with hierarchical positive or negative evaluations of the language spoken at either pole (cf. **vulgar speech**).

prescriptivism – the belief that phonological, morphological, grammatical, syntactic and lexical usage must follow codified rules established by a standard or norm. Adherents evaluate language as “correct” or “incorrect,” “pure” or “impure,” “beautiful” or “ugly” based on conformity to these rules. Benjamin Franklin was a prescriptivist (cf. Chapters 2, 4, 14, Parts IV and V), striving from childhood to master the prescriptive model of his time, particularly Addison and Steele's *Spectator* (vol. 3, 1711). He also mocked non-standard shibboleths in the colonies of Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania (1739, Chapter 14).

proto-phoneme – within Franklin's RMS system, this concept applies to each of his twenty-six characters, including the six he designed himself, reflecting his principle of “one letter for one sound.” Although Franklin had no term for it, his approach demonstrates a clear intuitive understanding of the “phoneme,” a term coined more than a century later by A. Dufriche-Desgenettes (1873) and refined by Jan Baudouin de Courtenay (1870s–1890s). His use of minimal pairs—e.g., *fall* ~ *folly*, *sin* ~ *seen*, *did* ~ *deed*, *mem* ~ *maim*—and contrasts such as long high front <ii> vs <i> (IPA /i:/ vs /i/) or long mid front <ee> vs <e> (IPA /ɛ:/ vs

/ɛ/) demonstrates this understanding. The practice of using minimal pairs can be traced back to John Wallis, John Wilkins, and Sir Thomas Smith (1568) (see Fig. 13.1) and, for this reason, we could say that the intuitive understanding of the “phoneme” predates all our modern linguists by centuries. Tanford (2004) makes this same point about Franklin’s intuitive understanding of the existence of molecular and atomic particles.

Received Pronunciation – this term was first coined by Alexander Ellis during the late 19th century and was adopted by the linguists Henry C. Wyld and Daniel Jones. It was used throughout most of the 20th century in reference to the accent heard in the elite public schools (i.e. very private schools!) and universities of England (hence Oxford English). During the 1920s and 30s, it was the only English accent permitted on the BBC radio, which explains the term “BBC English.” The royal family also cultivated this accent and this explains the term “the Queen’s English”.

Following the advent of the Counterculture during the 1960s, this RP English accent was attacked because it served as a sociolinguistic symbol identifying the rich and powerful, in a word, the upper crust of England (cf. Giles, 1972, 1973...). On account of this, many linguists rejected the term RP English because of the elitist connotations it evoked. “Southern British English” was felt to be more acceptable and “neutral” by many. However, I reject it on three grounds.

- First, it is a misnomer: the English varieties of Somerset, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall etc. are also “southern British English” but the accents spoken there are often stigmatized by RP speakers.
- Secondly, southern British English can refer equally to grammar, not only accent. On the other hand, RP English is exclusively restricted to accent, not grammar.
- Thirdly, the reference here is almost exclusively to the English accent of cultivated English speakers from the London area. “British,” on the other hand, includes Wales, Scotland and the unionist areas of Northern Ireland, and I am tempted to add northern England. The populations in these areas are certainly not associated with RP English.
- Finally, I also reject “southern British Standard English” on the same grounds, but especially because, as stated previously, “standard” refers to “grammar,” not to “phonology.” One can speak standard English and have a regional accent, but it would be somewhat bizarre to hear someone with an RP accent using non-standard grammar.

To conclude, I estimate that, despite the negative stereotypes associated with it, and even if the codes have been relaxed to a point where RP can be used in “paritary” social contexts today, it is still the most adequate term to describe this

prestigious English accent.

register – traditionally, a register is understood as a hierarchy of language appropriateness, often stylistic, within the context of a standard language, as in Trudgill’s analysis of the relative pronoun in *Dialects of English: Studies in Grammatical Variation* (Longman/Routledge, various editions). Examples like “He is the man whom I saw yesterday,” “He is the man that I saw yesterday” or “He is the man I saw yesterday” would all be classified as “standard,” with the first example being the most prestigious and, very arguably, the last being considered the least formal (although the most common). However, “He is the man what I saw yesterday” (my example) would usually be excluded from such a discussion as it is considered “dialectal” and thus substandard. However, registers also exist within non-standard varieties and dialects, a point argued by J. R. Firth, (1957) in his posthumous *Papers in Linguistics 1934–1951* (London: Oxford University Press). French linguists such as Le Dû and Le Berre (2019) prefer to describe such variants in terms of a range of “registers” extending from the highly codified Norm to broad oral varieties. While this approach is practical, in my view, it encounters difficulties when accounting for *badumes* (“basilects”), by definition “fragmented, purely oral idioms” with their own linguistic systems. The latter, by nature, correspond more appropriately to “dialects” or “varieties” (see above, also “idiom”). I recorded an interesting example in Deane, Bolton, Lancashire in the 1990s. In Deane dialect speech, one of the greetings used was “[wɤts ‘døu wi ,ðɪ], literally, “What’s (to) do wi’ thee?” I heard a lady, born in 1915, fully conscious the broad dialectal version was inappropriate when greeting the local vicar, upgrade this expression, politely greeting him with “What’s to do with you, vicar?”

relic areas – in the context of the United States, these are regions – such as the Outer Banks of North Carolina, Tangier Island in the Chesapeake Bay, or large parts of Appalachia – that preserve conservative linguistic features. Many of these features show continuity dating back to the colonial period and, ultimately, to Great Britain itself (cf. Part III for numerous examples).

rhoticity – the realization of /r/ in 17th- and 18th-century England and America. In this book, discussions focus on two main questions: (1) the quality of Franklin’s /r/—was it apical, as Claude Wise argued (1948), or an approximant or retroflex, as I have argued (cf. Chapter 27)? (2) The degree of post-vocalic /r/ elision in 17th-century New England town records indicate that r-loss was relatively common, contrary to Grandgent’s claim that it was a recent development (post-1850s) in Massachusetts. His interpretation was almost certainly based on his observations of educated New England speech. Both Franklin and Webster insisted on pronouncing /r/ in all positions, as did Walker (1791) who, nevertheless, with

reference to London usage, comments on its weak realization in postvocalic position.

secular standards – see **standardization and standard language**

sharedness principle – the idea that during 17th-century koineization, speakers of diverse English dialects consciously or unconsciously retained only features shared by the largest number of varieties spoken by them in any given colony. This process primarily affected non-standard, paritary registers. This resulted in the preservation of shared aspects of older *badumes*/basilects while eliminating fringe or recessive features – such as initial [kn-] or [ŋh] for <kn>, [x] for <gh>, or verbal enclitics like *chill* [tʃɪl] (“I will”) and *I’s* [ɛɪs ~ əɪs] (“I shall”). Voicing of /f/, /s/ and /ʃ/ in southwestern dialects was similarly eliminated. Morphological features that were widely shared, such as multiple negation and a-prefixing, persisted in non-standard American English because they were common to all the southern and Midland English founder populations. Influence from above – by mesolectal middle-class speakers – and the spread of literacy through both ecclesiastical and secular standards, along with early public education (e.g., Massachusetts, 1642), exerted a powerful standardizing effect on colonial populations.

simplification – a process arising from contact among *badume* speakers at the regional level, resulting in creole-like reduction of phonology, morphology, grammar, syntax and the lexicon. Examples include the streamlining of verbal morphology: in southwestern England, B-forms appear as *I be, thou be, he/she/it be, we be, you be, they be*; in parts of the Midlands and North, forms like *I’m, thee’m, we’m* occur, while *he’m/she’m/they’m* are rare or unattested; other variants include *I’s, thou is, you is, they is*. Such forms are plentiful in AAVE, and their presence may reflect early contacts with speakers of non-standard English inter-dialects.

social layers – see *couche sociale*

sociolinguistics – Hudson (1991) stated that sociolinguistics is a redundant concept since “linguistics” is inseparable from the social dimension of language. Inspired by Marcellesi et al. (1994), I have a very broad vision of sociolinguistics and view it as an umbrella term encompassing the sociology of language, anthropological linguistics, ethnolinguistics, geolinguistics and dialectology.

speech community – a term coined by Milroy and Milroy (1985) referring to a group of speakers sharing common codes of evaluation and expectations about language use. This includes common judgements about appropriateness whether codified and standard or not. The boundaries and extent of any

“speech community” remain vague, however, and on account of its inherently flexible boundaries, Leslie Milroy later emphasized the concepts of “clusters” and “networks” to describe the internal structure of speech communities more precisely. The concepts and interlinkage of idiom and institution are preferred in this study.

stabilization – the process by which a linguistic system becomes more consistent and resistant to rapid change over time. In British America, this occurred during the first century of settlement. Stabilization resulted from koineization, in which competing forms within the “feature pool” were reduced through the “sharedness principle,” primarily affecting paritary varieties, and also through accommodation from above, whereby overtly prestigious speakers exerted influence via secular and ecclesiastical standards. Increased literacy also contributed to linguistic harmonization, again, most particularly in Massachusetts. However, see Lowell’s Biglow Papers (1848) for the limitations of this argument. While competing forms were reduced within more prestigious institutions, they were not entirely eliminated, as many features persisted orally in work-related, paritary-level idioms and institutions (cf. Parts II and III).

standard ideology – the belief, widespread among literate people past and present, that there is only one “correct” way of speaking a language – English or any other major Western European language. This ideology has often led linguists to overlook or undervalue non-standard varieties for the simple reason that they too have been conditioned to accept prescriptive visions on language. As discussed in Chapter 10, standard ideology reflects a lingering influence of the Great Chain of Being, linking social hierarchy to language hierarchy: negative judgements of “low” varieties along a vertical axis are frequently paired with the low social status of their speakers, producing the familiar conflation of “vulgar language” with working-class or rural speech.

standardization and standard language – the social process by which a single linguistic form is selected, often by a committee of self-appointed experts, and promoted as the norm across a community. It is a direct result of codification and is tied to power, institutions, and the “overt prestige” of a disparitary linguistic model and its speakers. The standard is imposed from above and serves as the model for education, administration and other formal domains. In Franklin’s time, both ecclesiastical and secular standards were influential; the secular standard, for example, was not fully codified until Samuel Johnson’s *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755). Concepts of “correct” and “incorrect” usage derive from the standard. While the standard language carries high social prestige and marks its users as members of elite strata, it is not inherently superior linguistically; any dialect, given sufficient institutional support, could

theoretically have been elevated to the status of a national standard.

synchronic linguistics – the study of a language or variety at a single point in time. Traditionally, linguists emphasized a strict separation between synchronic and diachronic approaches. (de Saussure, 1916). For de Saussure, a synchronic study was the analysis of *état* or “state” of language which he imagined to be what I would describe as a “static slice of time”. However, Labov’s study of social stratification in New York City (1966) demonstrated that a synchronic study can also reveal linguistic change in real time, such as /r/-loss or its retention across social groups. Similarly, modern contrastive dialect studies show features that have been “frozen” at different stages of their evolution, for example, the varied realizations of the PRICE vowel today: [i:], [ɪ], [ɛɪ], [aɪ], [əɪ], [ɔɪ], [a:], etc. These are in fact snapshots of ongoing linguistic change. The idea of an inert state of language is an illusion for one good reason. Any dialect or language is composed of individual speakers each of whom commands a range of idioms and registers that function within an array of social institutions. The reality is that each idiolect is infinitely dynamic and manifests linguistic change in progress.

tense vowels – vowels pronounced with greater muscular “tension,” which can be either short or long. The modern tendency is to assume “tense” vowels are long. Modern French /i/ is produced with more muscular constriction than RP/GA /i:/ and, in Early Modern English (EME), both long and short vowels were realized with the tongue slightly higher and closer to the French realization (cf. *lax vowels*). This historical tenseness may explain the variable lengthening or shortening of vowels observed in the 17th century in England and North America. For example, *sin* could be realized as [sin] rather than [sɪn], and some 18th-century speakers extended it to [si:n] (and perhaps [si:m]), allowing poets to rhyme it with *seen* [si:n]. Similar phenomena are seen in words like *fish*, realized as [fi:] in contemporary Appalachia and Lancashire (RP/GA [fɪʃ]).

uniformitarian principle – in the context of this book, this is the idea that the same processes that operate for contemporary languages (i.e. the role of articulatory linguistics in language change, culturally conditioned sociolinguistic pressures on language and language change, etc.) were also applied to language use in similar ways in past times.

variational linguistics – the branch of linguistics that studies variation in language use. One of the major goals is to better understand how and why speakers choose between different linguistic features in different social, regional or contextual settings. This was one of the primary objectives of Parts II and III. Such studies attempt to demonstrate that linguistic variation is systemic and rule-governed, not random.

variety – see dialect

vocoid – a phonetic sound produced without significant constriction of the vocal tract and which can sound like a vowel but is not necessarily (cf. **contoid**). For instance, for Pike, approximants such as [w], [j], [ɹ] and even syllabic [ɹ] are vocoids. In traditional grammar [w] and [j] were once called semi-vowels.

vulgar speech – the term commonly used from the 17th to the 19th century to describe stigmatized, non-standard varieties spoken by the lower classes. This form of speech is to be contrasted with “polite” language, in reference to the standard speech of high-middle-class speakers and members of the aristocratic class.

Vulgar Old English – a term used by Robert Burchfield (*The English Language: A Survey*, 1985) to describe the stigmatized, rural varieties of Old English spoken across Anglo-Saxon England before the Norman Invasion. The term highlights that, even without written records, basilectal or *badume* forms clearly existed. In northern and eastern England and Scotland, these varieties were influenced by a Scandinavian adstratum, while in the Southwest, along the Welsh border, and into Strathclyde, a Brittonic/Celtic substratum persisted, surviving in places such as Cumbria and Strathclyde until after the Norman Invasion. In parts of Devon, the shift to Old English did not occur until the 10th century, which likely shaped the development and morphological breakdown of the language.

Why is this significant? Contrary to earlier assumptions, Old English speakers did not share a single unified acrolect. Broad, rural varieties were part of the language from its inception and were stigmatized by secular and ecclesiastical elites, explaining the relative scarcity of written evidence. The existence of Vulgar Old English is attested by the Venerable Bede in his *Ecclesiastical History of England*, with Cædmon’s Hymn providing a clear example.⁵

5 Cædmon, a servant and monk of poor origin, most likely a Strathclyde Briton, miraculously composed a poem in a dream in which he praised God in an elegant register of Old English, a register he could not otherwise master. This testifies to the existence of a class of Britons and poor Anglo-Saxons who served in monasteries and who spoke “Vulgar Old English”. Cædmon meaning “Battle Station” in Brittonic, appears under a more evolved form of Brittonic as Cadfan (cf. Cadfan ap Iago, a 7th-century Welsh king of Gwynedd).

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Lucy Barnes was in charge of marketing.

This book was peer-reviewed by two anonymous referees. Experts in their field, these readers give their time freely to help ensure the academic rigour of our books. We are grateful for their generous and invaluable contributions.

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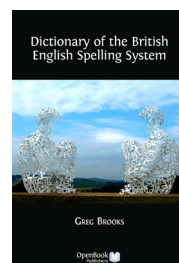
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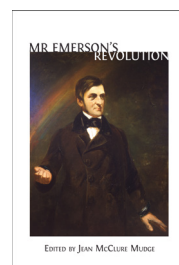
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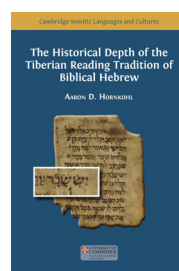
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Benjamin Franklin, Orthoepist and Phonetician

VOL. 2: Colonial American Voices and London Norms: Franklin's Quest for an Orthographic Reform

Gary D. German

Benjamin Franklin has been hailed as an inventor, scientist, printer, author, philosopher, diplomat, philanthropist and political activist and, especially, a founding father of the United States, but few are aware he was also a phonetician. This book offers a groundbreaking exploration of Franklin's little-studied linguistic legacy—his Reformed Mode of Spelling (1768/1779). In this short treatise, Franklin outlined a plan for a radical, phonetically-based modernization of the English spelling system that would simultaneously serve as a pronunciation guide for what he envisaged to be 'correct' English as well as a practical scheme allowing the unlettered and foreigners to learn to read and write within a week. The social and sociolinguistic reasons for its inception as well as what that model entailed linguistically are the focus of this book.

Moreover, while Franklin's fascination with English orthographic reform is known among specialists, previous studies have rarely taken his reform seriously. This is the first comprehensive linguistic analysis of his phonetic system within the broader historical and sociolinguistic context of early American English, a study which also includes comparative analyses of 17th and 18th century English varieties. Drawing on an impressive array of archival and manuscript sources—some previously unknown—Gary D. German reconstructs Franklin's linguistic environment and investigates how his proposed spelling reform functioned as both a phonetic guide as well as a political and cultural statement.

The book employs a robust historical sociolinguistic methodology which, for the first time, distinguishes between Franklin's native American pronunciation and that proposed in his RMS. The data presented offer a persuasive answer to the question of whether his model was 'English' or 'American' while also exploring speaker networks and personal correspondence to trace linguistic patterns.

This study is a vital contribution to historical linguistics, American studies, and the growing field of World Englishes. With its detailed analysis and interdisciplinary appeal, it sheds new light on both Franklin's intellectual world and the complex phonological landscape of early American-English. It is essential reading for linguists, historians, and anyone fascinated by the roots of American English.

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